

PS3505
H185K5
1919



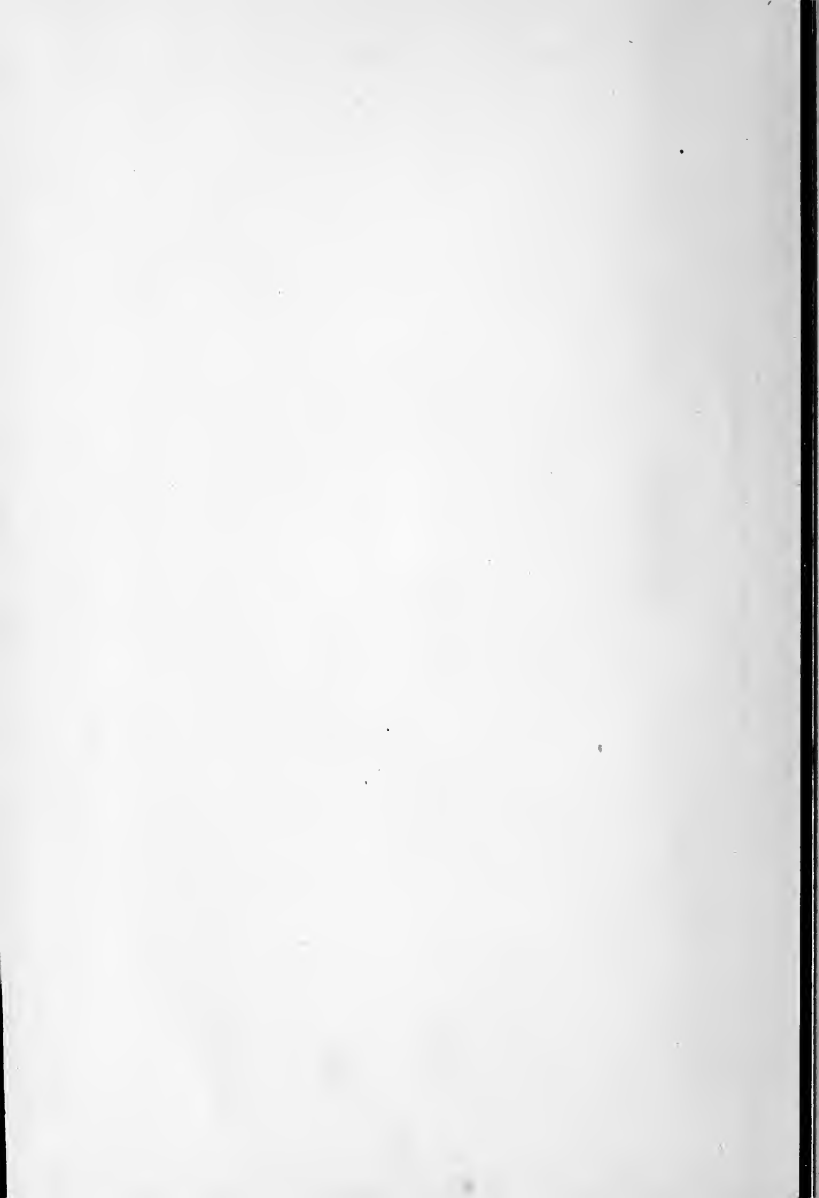
Class PS 3505

Book H 185 K5

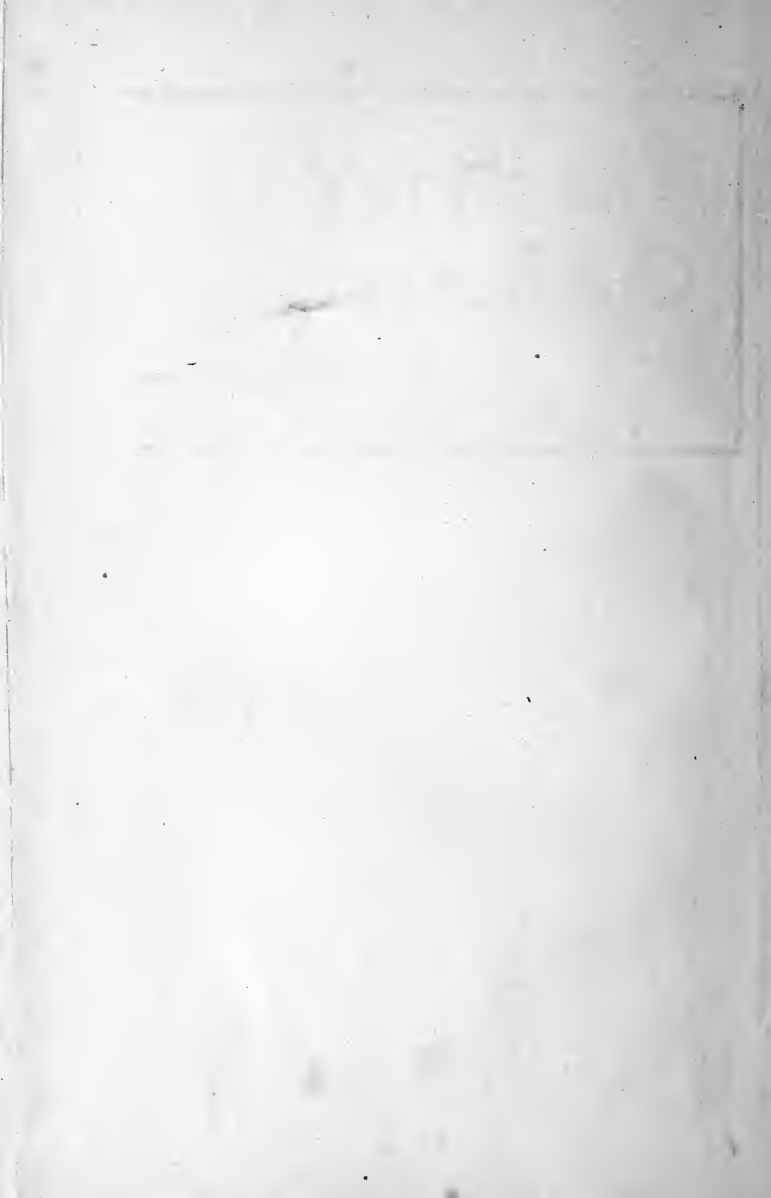
Copyright No. 1919

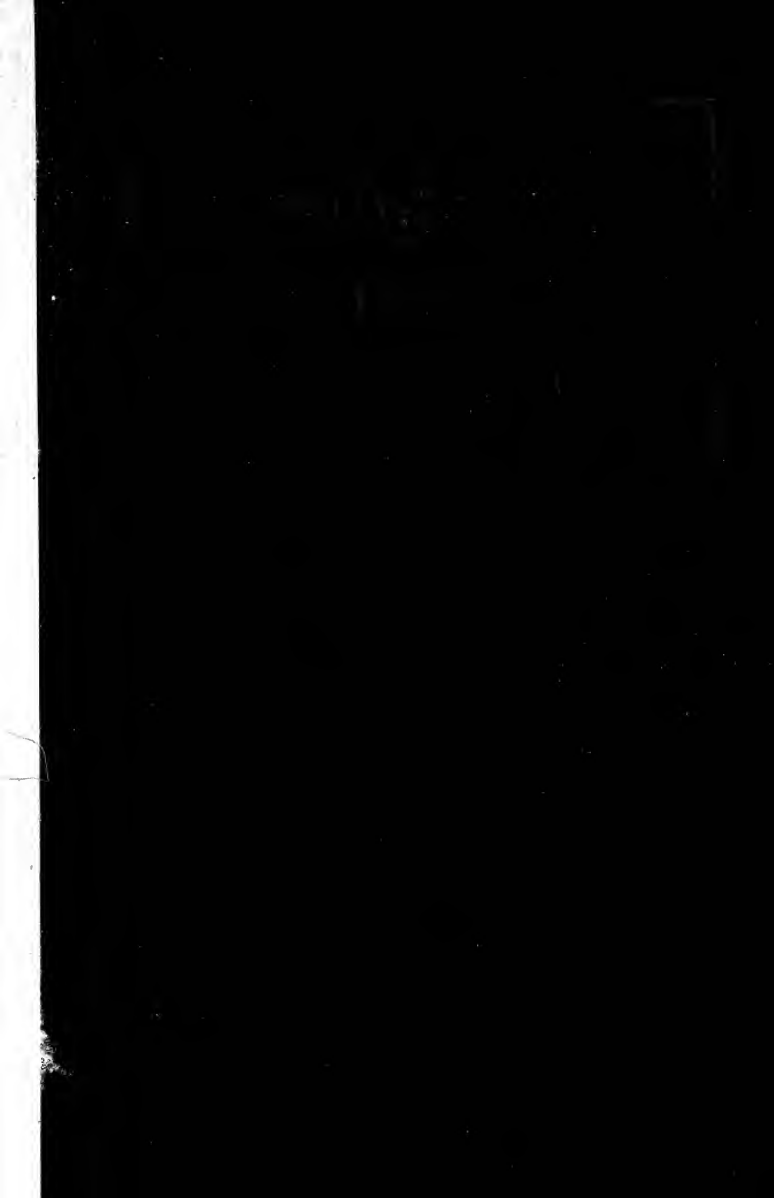
COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

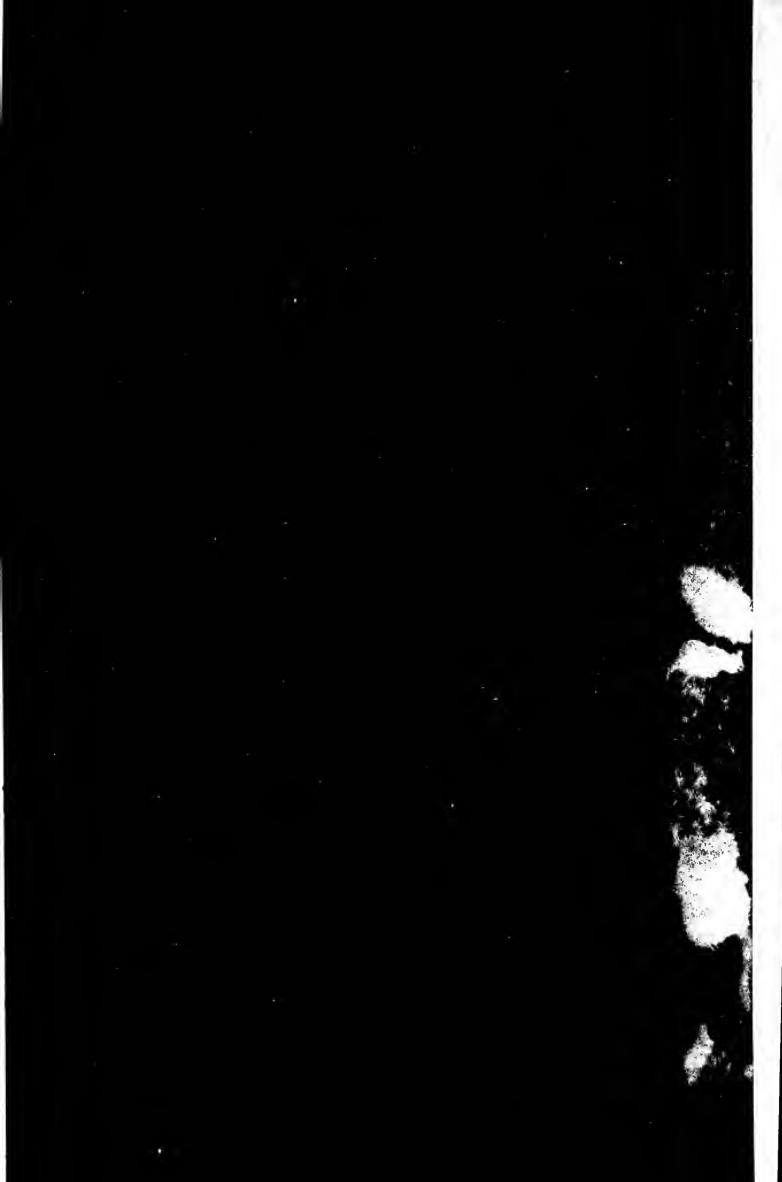












THE KING'S CUPBEARER

915
1208

AN HISTORICAL, MORALITY PLAY

IN TWELVE CANTICLES

BY

AGNES CHALMERS

Published by
THE CRESCENT PUBLISHERS,
Grand Rapids, Michigan.
U. S. A.

Copyright, 1919, by Agnes Chalmers
Grand Rapids, Michigan

SEP 26 1919

PS3505
H185K5
1919

*This book is offered as an American's
expression of gratitude to the King of
Great Britain and Ireland and his valiant
armies through whose unselfed service
Jerusalem was restored December 9,
1917, to the civilized world.*



©CLD 52679

*AN EXPLANATION OF THE WRITING
OF THIS PLAY*

THE POET AND HIS SONGS

As the birds come in Spring
We know not from where;
As the stars come at evening
From depths of the air;

As the rain comes from the cloud
And the brook from the ground
As suddenly, low or loud,
Out of silence a sound;

As the grapes come to the vine
The fruit to the tree;
As the wind comes to the pine
And the tide to the sea;

As comes the white sails of ships
O'er the ocean's verge;
As comes the smile to the lips,
The foam to the surge;

So come to the Poet his songs,
All hitherward blown
From the misty realm that belongs
To the vast unknown.

* * * * *

For voices pursue him by day
And haunt him by night,
And he listens and needs must obey,
When the Angel says: "Write!"

—*Longfellow.*

31

INTRODUCTION

THIS play is designed to give to the world a simple lesson in honest building. No more appropriate words of introduction could be offered than Montaigne has given in describing the value of the honest motive which should accompany all constructive work. " 'Tis an exact life," writes Montaigne, "that maintains itself in due order in private. Every one may juggle his part, and represent an honest man upon the stage; but within, and in his own bosom, where all may do as they list, where all is concealed, to be regular—there's the point. The next degree is to be so in his house, and in his ordinary actions, for which we are accountable to none, and where there is no study nor artifice. And therefore Bias, setting forth the excellent state of a private family, says: 'of which the master is the same within, by his own virtue and temper, that he is abroad, for fear of the laws and report of men.' And it was a worthy saying of Julius Drusus, to the masons who offered him for three

thousand crowns to put his house in such a posture that his neighbors should no longer have the same inspection into it as before: 'I will give you,' said he, 'six thousand to make it so that everybody may see into every room.' "

If this play furnishes an opportunity to look more closely into our dwellings, and if, even in a degree, it enables "everybody" to "see into every room," "The King's Cup-bearer" shall thus have aided—somewhat—in the ultimate liberation of the human race.

AGNES CHALMERS

Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Thanksgiving, 1916.

THE CAST

CANTICLE I

(In the order of their appearance)

HANANI, *brother of Nehemiah*

MESSENGER

SECOND MESSENGER

NEHEMIAH, *the King's cupbearer*

ARTAXERXES, *King of Babylon*

(Military Aid)

SIGHT—*Intuition*

TOUCH—*Gratitude*

TASTE—*Patience*

SMELL—*Charity*

HEARING—*Wakefulness*

CANTICLE II

(Previous Characters)

CANTICLE III

ELIASHIB, *the High Priest*

SEVERAL PRIESTS

MEN OF JERICO

ZACCUR

SONS OF HASSENAAH

MEREMOTH, MESHULLAM, *and* ZADOK

SEVERAL TEKOITES

JEHOIADA *and* MESHULLAM

MELATIAH *and* JABON

UZZIEL *and* HARANIAH

REPAIAH, JEDAIAH, *and* HATTUSH

THE CAST (continued)

MALCHIJAH *and* HASHUB
SHALLUM
DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM
HANUN
MALCHIAH
REHUM, HASHABIAH, BAVIA, *and* EZER
BARUCH
MEREMOTH
BENJAMIN *and* HASHUB
BINNUI *and* PALAL
THE NETHINIMS *and* TEKOITES
PRIESTS
ZADOK *and* SHEMAIAH
HANANIAH, HANUM, *and* MESHULLAM
GOLDSMITHS *and* MERCHANTS
ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SHALLUM

CANTICLE IV

SANBALLAT
FIRST MESSENGER
SENSUALITY
GESHEM
SECOND MESSENGER
SHAME
SLEEP

THE CAST (continued)

CANTICLE V

(Previous Characters)

CANTICLE VI

GROUPS OF JEWS

SHEMAIAH

WIFE OF SHEMAIAH

HASHUB

BINNUI

Previous Characters

CANTICLE VII

PRIDE OF ACHIEVEMENT

HUMAN RECOGNITION

SHIFTLESSNESS

SELF-PITY

HUMAN WILL

PERSONALITY

EASE

JEALOUSY

IDOLATRY

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

HURRY

PERSECUTION

ENEMY

LOVE OF MONEY

CANTICLE VIII

HUMAN BIRTH

MATURITY

THE CAST (continued)

DISCOURAGEMENT

DEATH

DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE

CANTICLE IX

IMPS

EZRA, *the Scribe*

TOBIAH

Previous Characters

CANTICLE X

(Previous Characters)

NEW CUPBEARER

CANTICLES XI AND XII

(Previous Characters)

THE KING'S CUPBEARER

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The word, Nehemiah, is derived from the Hebrew, nek-hem-yaw, meaning "comforted of God." The word, Jerusalem, is from the Hebrew, yer-oo-shaw-lame, meaning founded peacefully, or, habitation of peace. "To be safe in mind, body and estate," one authority adds in defining Jerusalem.

Nehemiah, the Jewish patriot, was Cup-bearer in the royal palace of Shushan during the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus. During Nehemiah's term of service in the Persian Court, word came of the unfortunate condition of the children of Israel, the remnant, or returned colony, who dwelt unprotected in the unfortified city of Jerusalem. In this connection, it is of interest to recall that in the year 588 B. C., Nebuzaradan, a lieutenant under Nebuchadnezzar, razed to the ground the city of Jerusalem, its Temple and protecting walls. Moses had earlier predicted that, if in the land of their captivity the children of Israel repented of their evil,

the Holy City would again be restored to them and that they would then be able to rejoice in peace and safety within the protection of its rebuilt fortifications.

Nehemiah's sincere concern for the welfare of the captive Jews within the devastated "City of David" led him earnestly to request the King to give him a commission to go to Jerusalem and repair the demolished walls of the city. Having obtained this royal commission, the King's Cupbearer left the Persian Court, accompanied by a military escort, and reached Jerusalem B. C. 444, remaining there until B. C. 432.

During the first fifty-two days of the Prince's sojourn in Jerusalem, he rebuilt the city's wall, and although he was beset on all sides with discouragements and doubts, he faithfully continued his work until the fortifications were finished. During the process of the work on the walls, Nehemiah was persecuted unceasingly by the jealous governors of Samaria and the Plain region, Sanballat and Geshem and their accomplice, Tobiah. In order to defeat the purpose of his scheming enemies, Nehemiah set a watch "against them day and night." He supplied his workers with both tools and weapons so that they might work with one hand and

with the other fight against the foe.

This earnest Prince not only bore the mockery and abuse of those outside of the city but he likewise endured the condemnation of his own workmen who rebelled against the heavy tithes and cruel oppression of their rulers and nobles.

After the completion of the wall, the people joyously realized that they truly understood for the first time the Law, when they heard the Bible read by Ezra, the Scribe.

Although a solemn covenant had been made to "walk in God's law" by observing brotherly love, supporting the Temple, and avoiding inter-marriages with the heathen, after Nehemiah was called back to Babylon, all of these sacred vows were broken. In this connection it is interesting to note that historians give two views of this absence of Nehemiah from Jerusalem. Some writers are of the opinion that Nehemiah was called back to Babylon for punishment because of the accusatory letters Sanballat and Geshem sent to Artaxerxes regarding the Cupbearer's desire, or ambition, rather, to become King of Jerusalem. Some writers are of the opinion that Nehemiah returned to the Persian Court in fulfillment of the promise he gave before

leaving Jerusalem. The view is here taken that Nehemiah was punished as a convict slave, doomed to hard labor in the quarries of Persia during his nine years' absence at the Court of Artaxerxes.

The Smith-Peloubet Dictionary of the Bible states that "various stratagems" were "resorted to to get Nehemiah away from Jerusalem, and if possible to take his life; but that which most nearly succeeded was the attempt to bring him into suspicion with the king of Persia, as if he intended to set himself up as an independent king as soon as the walls were completed. The artful letter of Sanballat so far wrought upon Artaxerxes that he issued a decree stopping the work till further orders."

After a nine years' sojourn at the Court of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah again returned to Jerusalem. He vigorously ejected Eliashib and Tobiah from the Temple because of their attempt personally to own the Church which is destined to serve impersonally all mankind. This royal Cupbearer enforced the separation of the mixed tribes from Israel, arranged for the reward of the singers and the Levites who had actually performed the work of reconstruction, and made provision for the

perpetual care and support of the Temple.

In all these ways, Nehemiah, "The King's Cupbearer," acted much as all others act to-day whose desire is to build rather than to destroy. He knew that the practical and the ideal, the male and the female, must be forever united in the individual consciousness.

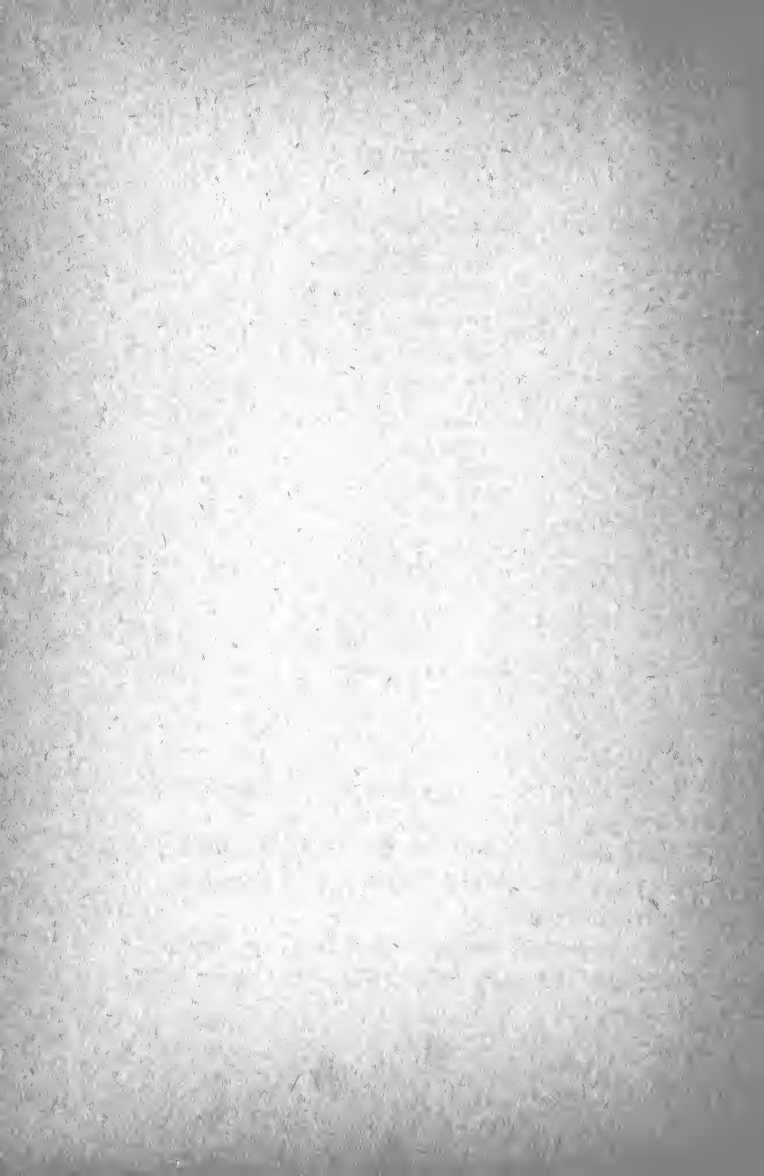
Possibly history will not bear out the license taken when the daughters of Shallum are made to appear as actual workers on the walls of Jerusalem. The appearance of the daughters of Shallum as builders; and the five women, representing Intuition, Gratitude, Patience, Charity, and Wakefulness coincides with the tender womanly traits "The King's Cupbearer" manifested in all the loving, motherly care he showed at all times for the welfare of the children of Israel. In his consistent desire to rebuild the waste walls of Jerusalem, and thus safeguard the remnant of the house of Israel, Nehemiah was, in reality, re-establishing for all time that quality of thought which Bernard Shaw designates as "an eternal womanly principle in the universe." Nehemiah's fearless denunciation of crafty malice in his fight against the governors of the Plain shows forth the courageous masculine traits of this Prince's noble character. Nehemiah fully

realized that strength and courage, patience and intuition must be truly manifested by one who would become an honest, constructive builder, and therefore stood earnestly by his work day by day.

NOTE: *"The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia"* states — "We should naturally have expected the names of great religious teachers like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc., to be associated with some of the Psalms, and the fact that such is not the case tends to show that these hymns were either composed by members of the guilds of temple singers for the worship in the second temple, or that they were gathered by these priestly musicians after coming to expression here and there among the people."

In quoting the Psalms in this play, it is with the thought that possibly some of these constructive songs of gratitude came into being when the waste walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt as a protection to the city and its temple.

No more fitting tribute was ever given than that which history has recorded of Nehemiah, "The King's Cupbearer:" "His character seems almost without a blemish."



PROLOGUE

DESCRIPTION: *Two Prologue speakers, SIGHT and INTUITION, appear before a curtain which portrays two parallel paths winding up a mountain side. One path is the way of human experience, the other typifies the way of spiritual discernment. The one path is beset with obstacles; the other winds upward without obstruction. Both paths converge in the distance. (The Prologue is spoken by SIGHT, a man; and by INTUITION, a woman.)*

SIGHT

My friends, you know him well, this man of
good
Who speaks to you tonight. Across the way,
Perchance he dwells from you. Earth's
brotherhood
Comprises such as he. Yea, day by day,
You meet him in the street,—the man who
goes

About his daily toil with hope and cheer,
A loving worker, he who always knows
The joy of building rightly in his task,—
This is "The King's Cupbearer." None may
ask

To know a nobler one than he who serves
Mankind with just the duty of each hour.—
This is "The King's Cupbearer" who deserves
The merit Love bestows. Truth's strength
and pow'r

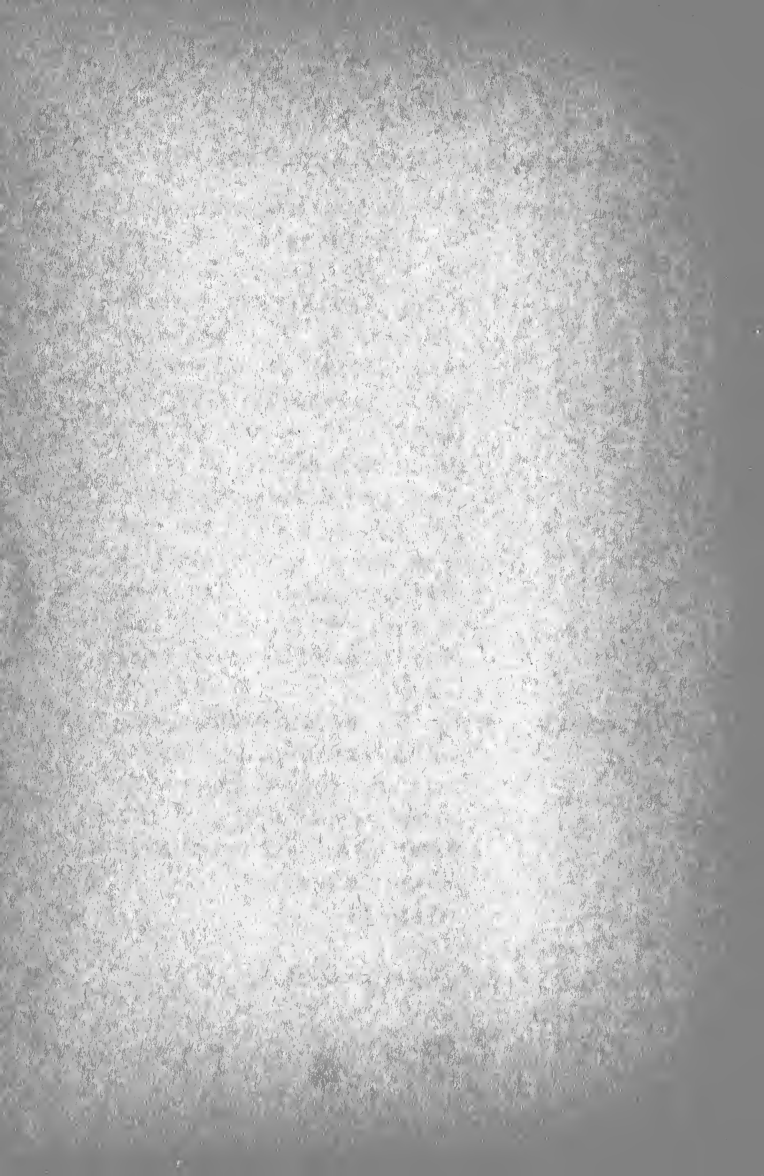
Be with each royal Cupbearer we meet,
And pass to-day, upon life's surging street.

INTUITION

We may be King's Cupbearer,
As we go on our way,
Serving the wine of heav'n,
Loving all faithfully.
The cup Love gives is patience;
The wine, Truth understood.
The King is Our God in heav'n,
Guarding earth's brotherhood.
Jerusalem is knowing
Man is nor bond, nor free;
Blest City, ever sowing
Seeds of true liberty.
The wall we build is patience,
Protecting men from wrong.
The temple, Church about us;
Love's anthem,—work and song.

The new birth comes through proving
Man is complete to-day.
Watching and ever loving
Lead to eternal day.
Sanballat is sin's malice,
The curse of peace and good;
Geshem, hate's poison chalice,
Drugging all those who stood
Bravely through storm and sunlight,
Ever through peace and war,
Staunchly at dawn or midnight,
Casting sin's curse afar;
But ever God in heav'n
Destroys the hand of fear,
He who would stand is giv'n
Strength to endure and bear.
Dear Friends, may we be watchful
To aid all on our way,—
To build and to destroy not,
Blest King, we watch and pray.

(SIGHT and INTUITION turn and walk some distance together. They finally separate, each to take a different path. SIGHT takes the rough path of human experience; INTUITION, the clear way of spiritual discernment. In the dim distance, it may be seen that these two paths converge.)



CANTICLE I

REPENTANCE, DOUBT AND RESOLVE

DESCRIPTION: *The scene is a richly appointed room in Shushan, the palace, at the Persian Court of KING ARTAXERXES, in the year 445 B. C. The hangings of the room are of white, green, and blue, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble. The several beds in the spacious room are draped in gold and silver. The floor is a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble.*

DISCOVERED: *When the curtain divides, several messengers are discovered standing in the center of the room talking to HANANI. They are engaged in earnest discussion.*

HANANI

(sadly)

There is no hope; the city desolate
Now stands.

MESSENGER

Doth not one heed its direful fate?

HANANI

(wearily)

No one repairs the city's shattered walls!

SECOND MESSENGER

Is no one mindful lest its fortress falls?

HANANI

The world has not awakened yet to see

There is nor Greek, nor Gentile, bond nor
free.

THIRD MESSENGER

Jerusalem is lost, yea, cast aside!

HANANI

(despairingly)

The city which hath been adorned, the bride
Of Life eternal!

*(As these words are spoken, a stream of
moonlight floods the room. NEHEMIAH
is heard praying outside. The words are
distinctly heard, although the speaker is
not seen.)*

NEHEMIAH'S WORDS

"I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven,
That keepeth covenant and mercy
For them that love him and observe his com-
mandments;
Let thine ear now be attentive,
And thine eyes open,

That thou mayest hear the prayer of thy
servant,

Which I pray before thee now, day and night,
For the children of Israel, thy servants,

And confess the sins of the children of Israel
Which we have sinned against thee; both I

*(The curtains at rear part, and NEHEMIAH
slowly enters. He is a very tall, dark man,
wearing heavy black beard, without mus-
tache. He is dressed in the robes of a
royal cupbearer, olive green satin gar-
ment with conventional design of em-
broidery, and a wide shoulder sash of
royal purple.)*

And my fathers house have sinned."

(Nehemiah I: 5, 6.)

NEHEMIAH

(earnestly addressing HANANI)

The Jews which have escaped, tell me, I pray,
If they, left of captivity, are safe?

HANANI

(to NEHEMIAH)

They are in dire affliction, day by day,—
In great reproach; the walls are broken
down;

Jerusalem in hazard stands; its gates
Are burning.

NEHEMIAH

(sitting down and weeping—to himself)

Before the God of heaven, grant my renown
May come, alone, through building up these
walls.

Yea, every other task of mine must wait.
(KING ARTAXERXES *and the QUEEN enter, fol-
lowed by a train of courtiers.*)

(*The KING and QUEEN ascend a miniature
throne*)

THE KING

Were it not pity, Cupbearer, that thou
Shouldst seek to go about this thankless
task?

The captives in Jerusalem art now
Endangered.

If any grievous plague hath heav'n
Through centuries it hath been freely giv'n
To waste Jerusalem.

(NEHEMIAH *bows his head. He makes no an-
swer. The KING summons messengers
and gives orders for a seven-day feast.
Enter several messengers who offer all
drink in various shaped vessels of gold.
Royal wine is served in abundance. NE-
HEMIAH approaches the KING'S throne
and silently kneels. He then arises and
leaves the stage, L. During the festivities
of wine drinking, in which all join save the
KING and QUEEN, NEHEMIAH again en-
ters, bearing two jewelled cups of wine,*

*brimming full. He presents these to the
KING and QUEEN.)*

(to NEHEMIAH)

Thou art not sick

Answer me, is this but sorrow of thine heart?

NEHEMIAH

(kneeling and kissing KING'S hand)

O, King, live thou forever:

(sadly)

If I had

The gift of tongues, I might then tell to thee

The plight of those who in captivity

Now wait within Jerusalem. The place

Of all my fathers' sepulchres lies waste;

The very gates are now consumed with fire.

THE KING

(according NEHEMIAH permission to arise,

NEHEMIAH stands before the KING)

For what doth thou then make request?

NEHEMIAH

(with hand uplifted, addressing the KING)

Higher

Than heav'n, let this, my prayer, ascend.

I pray thee, King,

Send me, that I may wisely build and mend

Those broken walls.

*(The KING turns and addresses the QUEEN,
who is seated beside him on the raised
dias.)*

THE KING
(questioningly)

How long his absence, Queen? When shall
we sing

Of his return?

(Both KING and QUEEN drain to the dregs
the cups NEHEMIAH has brought. They
return the empty cups to the Cupbearer,
who places them on table, R. NEHEMIAH
again stands before the KING and
QUEEN.)

THE QUEEN
(to the KING)

We shall not miss him

(kindly glancing toward NEHEMIAH)

if he can rebuild

Those walls that lieth desolate. Stilled

Shall our sorrow be till he return.

NEHEMIAH

(Stepping forward and kissing the hands of
the KING and QUEEN, as he kneels before
them)

I set a time to come; it shall be when

The waste walls of my thought are built.

Yea, then

I shall return. Forget not that I go

Forth but to struggle with one deadly foe—

Destructive self—the self that rends, indeed,

All else save its own whims.

King, I may need letters to governors.

(KING gives NEHEMIAH permission to arise.

As NEHEMIAH rises, the KING hastily whispers directions to scribes regarding letters. The scribes withdraw to one side and take from drawer documents which they present to the KING.)

THE KING

(receiving the papers and handing them to the QUEEN)

(to NEHEMIAH)

My son, go forth,

And prove to all the world the mighty worth
Of building rightly.

THE QUEEN

God bless these messages, and grant the way
Is opened through each word to higher way
Of peace.

(hands letters to the KING)

THE KING

(Beckoning to five men in military garb, who are waiting quietly at one side. The men approach the KING, give military salute, and kneel.)

(to NEHEMIAH)

I summon officers to go with thee,—
This military aid

(pointing to men and giving them the signal to arise. They all arise.)

God grant they be
Faithful to service, willing to obey,
And ever watchful lest thou fall'st the prey
Of foe.

SIGHT

*(Stepping forward and warmly shaking
hands with NEHEMIAH, peering into his
face and looking everywhere about.)*
Ah, look! My name is Sight. I'll try
To see for thee.

HEARING

(listening—to NEHEMIAH)
Hark! I am Hearing. I
Will hear for thee.

TOUCH

*(touching everything and bowing
—to NEHEMIAH)*
My name is Touch. I do
Discern all things.

TASTE

(tasting wine, proudly—to NEHEMIAH)
My name is Taste. I, too,
Teach thee discernment and delight,—a taste
Of better things.

SMELL

(sniffing the air—to NEHEMIAH)
My name is Smell.
(with importance)

I waste

All time on niceties.

NEHEMIAH

(sizing up the men, disapprovingly)

Are these, my King,

The best thou hast?

THE KING

(to NEHEMIAH, eager to explain)

They are trained.

NEHEMIAH

(disapprovingly—to KING)

I would fling

Their training all aside if I might be

Protected by my better self.

THE KING

(regarding the five men sadly

—to NEHEMIAH)

I know

(shaking his head)

Just what thou fear'st, and, yet, no earthly
foe

Is conquered without them.

NEHEMIAH

(as if he would reject the aid of the men).

And, yet, to me

These soldiers stand for trained hypocrisy.

*(NEHEMIAH draws back from the five men
who crowd about him. They endeavor to
stand as his body guard.)*

No conquest save the conquest over each
And every one of them!

(sadly regarding the five men)

No vict'ry won
Save by self's transformation!

(to the five men)

Friends, to reach
My better self, I must discard, indeed.
All that thou cherisheth.

THE KING

(in a quandary—to himself)

I am perplexed!

THE QUEEN

(eagerly, to KING)

King, grant that I may say
One word of peace.

(indicating the five men)

These men in higher form
Have oft appeared to keep our Court from
harm.

(to NEHEMIAH, with deep conviction)
They can protect thee; if thou wouldst but
see
Their true selves, they will help to set thee
free.

NEHEMIAH

(to KING and QUEEN)

If they

(indicating five men)

have higher form, blest Queen and King,
I trust them, then, to guard from suffering
Thy servant.

(bowing and indicating himself)

SIGHT

(proudly, to NEHEMIAH)

I have been trained everywhere
To gain my present worth. I go, my friend,
With thee.

NEHEMIAH

*(again shrinking back from the five men as
if he could not go with them—to SIGHT)*

Thou speakest proudly, Sir, I dare
Not enter with thee in this task I do.

SIGHT

(eagerly to NEHEMIAH)

If I should reach a greater height, renew
My better self, wouldst thou then go with
me?

NEHEMIAH

(to SIGHT)

Assured, indeed, that I could never see
Aught but the real through thee, I, then,
shouldst go

With thee, Sir Sight, to conquer alien foe.

SIGHT

(to NEHEMIAH)

Then I shall stay with thee, for thou may'st
need

My presence as thou conquer'st form and
creed.

HEARING

*(stepping forward, convincingly
—to NEHEMIAH)*

Have I not heard for thee in days long past?

NEHEMIAH

(peering long into HEARING'S face, as if recognizing an undesirable acquaintance)

Yea, oft'times heard; I've oft'times wished
thou had'st

Not heard

*(covering his ears with his hands as if to
shut out unpleasant sounds)*

The jarring noises of the fast
Revolving centuries!

(as if brushing all noise aside)

Would, I might cast
Their shrieking woes aside!

(weeps)

HEARING

(pleadingly, to NEHEMIAH)

Friend, truly, I
Will stand for perfect hearing; I will try
To put down self.

NEHEMIAH

(testingly—to HEARING)

Nor hear of foe nor friend
Aught but the best?

(HEARING *nods assent*)

Then, come!

TOUCH

(*stepping forward and addressing* NEHEMIAH)

I, too, wouldst lend
Thee faithful service.

NEHEMIAH

(*to TOUCH*)

Yea, I know that thou
Hast wrought good oft'times, yet thy judgments now
Are biased.

TOUCH

(*proudly, to NEHEMIAH*)

I, friend, am trained to serve. Trust me!

SMELL

(*advancing and addressing NEHEMIAH*)
And I will warn thee when thou need'st to be
On guard

TASTE

(*hastily, to NEHEMIAH*)

I gladly tell thee what is good.

NEHEMIAH

(*looking at the five men, sadly*)
And yet, not one of you have understood!

ALL

(*incredulously*)

Not one of us has understood?

(to the five men)

Not one
Was ever credited with vict'ry won,—
Not in thy present forms. 'Tis very true
Thou art well trained to serve; yea, there
are few
Thine equals! Still, thou art so incomplete
I dare not go with thee!

(drawing back)

I dare not meet
—With just thine aid, alone,—I dare not go—
With thee alone—to conquer self, the foe
That doth resist the longest.

(loudly)

Men, awake
Thy better selves.

THE KING

(to NEHEMIAH)

Our Queen says they have better selves.
(indicating men)

I know
She truly speaks; thou may'st safely go
With these five, well-trained men.

THE QUEEN

(indicating men)

They always take
On higher forms whenever the command
Is giv'n.

THE FIVE MEN

(together)

We offer as a pledge our hand,

(all extend hand to NEHEMIAH)

In honor; if thou need'st us,

Thou shalt see

We will be present, friend, to set thee free
From self.

NEHEMIAH

(to five men)

Dear friends, I trust thee as we go

Forth to redeem all captives from the foe
Of self.

(instructing the men)

Mark, God's own word each man must speak!

Remember well, the fall'n and the weak

Look up in pray'r to us. God grant we may
Judge righteous judgment.

(with bowed head)

Let us watch and pray

For wisdom.

THE FIVE MEN

(together)

Let us ever faithful be!

NEHEMIAH

(to all)

'Til Israel's remnant shall be truly free.

(to the five)

Speak up, my men, and tell me, dost thou

know

That good must aid us daily as we go
Forth to our tasks?

(to KING and QUEEN)

I go, blest King and Queen,
With these,

(*indicating men*)

thy messengers. Grant they redeem
My self from sin and fear until I see
I am nor Greek, nor Gentile, bond nor free,
Nor male, nor female, in the task I do.

(*joyously*)

We shall redeem the remnant. Captive Jew
Shall be set free! Now I may go, indeed,

(*gathering men closely to him*)

with these.

Our Father knows our every need.

THE KING

(*handing the letters to NEHEMIAH*)

Go forth, thou Cupbearer of earthly King,
Go forth, and let the world in gladness ring
With all thine overcomings.

May these

(*indicating letters*)

Bring thee peace.

NEHEMIAH

(*with firm resolve*)

The city of my fathers' sepulchres must be
rebuilt!

It oft'times seems a struggle to begin
To cleanse one's thought from cursed fear
and sin.

I long to go, and yet,

(as if weakening in his resolve)

I am afraid.

(with firmness)

Ah, no, God hath made all things that were
made,

And called them "good" and "very good."

Blest King,

I go

(resolutely)

to conquer sin and suffering.

(NEHEMIAH steps forward and kneels a moment before the KING and QUEEN for a blessing.)

THE KING AND QUEEN

(together to NEHEMIAH)

Our blessing, Son, the Court of Persia gives
Thee full commission. Go! Earth's captive
lives!

*(KING and QUEEN give command for
NEHEMIAH to rise)*

NEHEMIAH

*(Rising, to All as if in prayer, with hands
outstretched. The five men stand close
to NEHEMIAH while the KING and QUEEN
and Court listen with bowed heads.)*

"O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear
Be attentive to the pray'r of thy servant,
And to the pray'r of thy servants who desire
To fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee,
Thy servant this day, and grant him mercy
In the sight of this man;

(indicating KING)

For I was "The King's Cupbearer." "

(Nehemiah 1:11.)

CANTICLE II

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF ENCOURAGEMENT

DESCRIPTION: *The scene shows the moon, under a half cloud, shedding light upon the waste walls of Jerusalem. The scene is laid in a valley. The dragon well is near and the dung port. A brook runs close by. A most disconsolate aspect. The gates of the wall have all been consumed with fire.*

DISCOVERED: *NEHEMIAH and the five men, SIGHT, TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL, HEARING, are standing together, viewing with cheerful countenances the most disconsolate of places, —Jerusalem's devastated walls. They walk together, as if on a tour of inspection, until they come to the gate of the fountain and the King's pool. A beast passes under this gate.*

NEHEMIAH

(to SIGHT)

"Ye see the distress that we are in,
How Jerusalem lieth waste,
And the gates thereof are burned with fire;
Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusa-
lem,

That we be no more a reproach."

(Nehemiah 2:17.)

E'en through this dire distress, I seem to be
Encouraged to press on and set men free.

SIGHT

(to NEHEMIAH)

The hand of God hath dealt so well with thee.
The King's words bless us. With sincerity
We go about this task.

NEHEMIAH

(to the five men)

Come, let us rise
And build these walls aright.

TOUCH

(joyously, to NEHEMIAH)

Let us surprise
The rulers, priests, and nobles with a wall
That never can be shattered, never fall.

TASTE

(to all)

We are despised, yea, laughed to scorn, and,
yet,

We, too, may build what multitudes forget
Not, nor despise.

SMELL

Let us build high—
High unto heav'n, that he who passeth by
May mark the remnant now is safe, indeed,
Within these walls.

HEARING

Where never form, nor creed
May enter.

NEHEMIAH

(approvingly to all)

Thou hast grown wise, my friends; yea,
thou dost speak
Words of true wisdom. All the lonely, weak
And weary ones of earth shall be redeemed.
Thou art much nobler than thou e'er hast
seemed.

I say again, thou hast grown wise; and high
Above thy former selves.

SIGHT

(meekly, to NEHEMIAH)

And, if we try
We may grow higher in this thing we do.

HEARING

We may put off the old man for the new.

NEHEMIAH

(to all)

My men, I see a change in thee.

THE FIVE MEN

(together)

'Tis true!

NEHEMIAH

(to all)

My friends, I doubted thee, but now I see
Thou, trained in things of God, may set men
free
From self.

THE FIVE MEN

(together)

'Tis true, we, trained in things of good,
Free thee and all earth's weary brotherhood.

NEHEMIAH

Then I must trust thy better selves, indeed,
In all this reconstruction. Friends, we need
To stand together.

THE FIVE MEN

(together)

Friend, nor lust, nor greed
Shall turn us back.

NEHEMIAH

(to all)

These broken walls shall be
Redeemed—this is God's work for thee and
me;
And, as we work, God's truth shall bring to
light
Our better selves.

THE FIVE MEN

(together)

God give us grace and might!

NEHEMIAH

(with hands outstretched—to the five)

Remember well, ye men, that which I say
The God in heav'n always points the way
Of him who builds for others.

THE FIVE MEN

(together)

He doeth well!

NEHEMIAH

(to all)

And yet he may not ever boast nor tell
Of what he builds. Ye have no portion, right,
Within Jerusalem. No fearful right
Of ownership may enter in thy work.
Come, let us build.

THE FIVE MEN

(together)

Let not one of us shirk

Our duty.

NEHEMIAH

(to all)

I, Cupbearer, lead thee forth.

THE FIVE MEN

(earnestly)

O, may our work alone speak of our worth.
(At this moment, the appearance of the men

changes. The dark garments they are wearing fall to the ground, showing bright, soft robes of ethereal nature. The men take on the forms of women as they stand in the moonlight, which has now become bright.)

NEHEMIAH

(beholding all with radiant countenance)

Ah, I have thought that thou wert men. I
see

The woman in thee now!

(peering into their faces)

(to SIGHT)

Thou, Sight, art Intuition in disguise,—
No wonder that thou hast discerning eyes.

(to TOUCH)

And, thou, Touch, art blest Gratitude. 'Tis
well

Thou know'st events before the world can
tell

They have begun; yea, friend, through grat-
titude!

(to TASTE)

Beloved Patience, thou art woman, too,
And male, as well; thou dost, indeed, renew
The youth of those who follow thee aright.

(to SMELL)

Dear Charity, thou lead'st to day.

(to HEARING)

And thou, dear Wakefulness, forever true
To highest good are thou. I scarcely knew
That thou wert male and female.

(looking closely)

Ah, I see

The woman in thee now.

Friends, this is well, for thou wilt need to be
Both male and female in this task ye do,—
Complete and satisfied. Each captive Jew,
When wakened, shall behold nor bond nor
free

Is he, indeed. The courage of the male
Is his, and woman's gentle tenderness;
Complete and satisfied, he cannot fail.
Yea, Israel's captives, still, shall richly bless
All men. They shall behold God's husbandry;
Wedded to Truth, all men shall then be free.
Oft'times, my friends, a task at first seems
light,

Though it loom large, indeed, to finite sight.
Be not fair weather friends. Stay thou and
fight

When fall discouragement and darkest
night,—

Through fiercest battle stay and win,—for
right.

“The God of heav'n, he will prosper us.”

CANTICLE III

HONEST DAILY NEEDS

DESCRIPTION: *A morning scene, showing a vast army of men ready for work on the waste walls of Jerusalem.*

DISCOVERED: *Eager groups of men carrying tools.*

ELIASHIB (the High Priest)
(*beckoning to several priests*)

Come, brethren, let us build this sheep gate well.

SEVERAL PRIESTS
(*together*)

And sanctify it to the Lord of Hosts.

MEN OF JERICHO

(*building and speaking together*)

What we have builded, future ages tell.

ZACCUR

Not one stroke of our hammers can be lost.

SONS OF HASSENAAH
(*working at fish gate*)

We lay the beams thereof; the doors are set;
The locks thereof, the bars thereof are fast.

MEREMOTH, MESHULLAM, and ZADOK
(together)

We work that no one ever can forget.

SEVERAL TEKOITES

And we that peace and truth forever last.

JEHOIADA and MESHULLAM

(working together at the old gate)

We lay each beam thereof, and set each door.

MELATIAH and JABON

(together)

We work nor ask for any blessing more.

UZZIEL and HANANIAH

(working on the broad wall)

The broad wall must be perfect, too, that we

May see them safe in their captivity.

REPAIAH, JEDAIAH, and HATTUSH

(working)

May see *them* safe, and who are they?

MALCHIJAH and HASHUB

(repairing the tower of the furnaces)

Each vagrant thought that hath become the

prey

Of self.

SHALLUM

(the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem,

working with his daughters)

I came here with my daughters, they who
rule

And work with me. Each one with her own

tool
Is building.

(the women drive nails)

DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM

(together)

We came that all may see
The utter helplessness, futility,
Of those who come disguised as women, when
The news of reconstruction reaches men.

HANUM

(repairing the valley gate)

Sanballat and Geshem, the ones you fear,
Daughters of Shallum?

DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM

(together)

Not if we keep on building, tier on tier.

ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SHALLUM

The ones we fear,—and yet we cannot fear
For God is God, alone, and he is All—
Is just the cursed falsehoods that would tear
One's true self from its union now with good.

MALCHIJAH

Ah, yes! One must abide
Forever at one's work in peace to know
God's law aright. To conquer self, the foe
Of progress, one must build high unto heav'n
E'en for another's good; such is the leav'n
Of understanding, wisdom, power, might,—
All those who sit in darkness see this light.

MALCHIAH

(building the dung gate)

There is so much to cleanse from every
thought,
I build the dung gate. All that I have
wrought
Endures forever.

SHALLUM

(repairing the gate to the fountain)

I set the doors of this, the fountain gate.
God's messengers may enter, but the fate
Of those who come to rob is fixed, indeed.
No one may enter here with form or creed.

NEHEMIAH

(repairing the place over against the sepulchre of David)

My friends, Sanballat hears we build this
wall;
The news has spread to him. "Ah, it shall
fall!"—

This is his dire foreboding. We abide
Forever at this task until we know
Those in captivity are saved from foe.

REHUM, HASHABIAH, BAVAI, and EZER
(repairing near the turning of the wall)

Never was work more welcome hour by
hour,—

BARUCH

Welcome, because it proves there is one

pow'r.

MEREMOTH

*(working at door—to the priests,
the men of the Plain)*

Courage, my friends, bear up, each day must
bring

Its own reward.

BENJAMIN and HASHUB

(working together)

Friends, let our hammers ring

(all hammering together)

In glad applause.

(joyous, ringing music)

BINNUI and PALAL

(hammering together)

No enemy can ever turn us back,

THE NETHINIMS and TEKOTITES

(working together)

Those who would build for good can never
lack.

THE PRIESTS

(repairing near the horse gate)

In learning meekness here, we may well find

No man upon this earth shall e'er unbind

Our work.

ZADOK AND SHEMAIAH

(working together)

If we toil on with love, we may renew

The waste walls with the fortified.

HANANIAH, HANUN AND MESHULLAM
(together)

We knew
Those shattered walls would one day be re-
deemed!

MALCHIAH (the goldsmith's son)
This broken shaft, it must be strongly
beamed.

GOLDSMITHS AND MERCHANTS
(working together)

Courage, my friends. Together we build well.
*(Their tools fall. Ringing noises. The eld-
est daughter of SHALLUM slips behind
each worker and, picking up fallen tools,
restores them to owners.)*

ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SHALLUM
(handing tools to men)

Here is thine hammer, friend;
(to another)

thy trowel fell.

NEHEMIAH
(to all)

Beware, my friends, one cometh in disguise,
A messenger of foes. Keep well thine eyes
Upon thy work.

(passing to another and addressing him)

Courage, my friend, work on,
Until each task of thine is fitly done.
(to another, encouragingly)

Work, till each task of thine is fitly done.
(*Pausing behind a worker and regarding his
work and tools approvingly.*)

Be not afraid of thy salvation, friend;
Thy tools are clean, thy hands are true,
The nail which thine hands doth send
Strikes straight to the mark.
This thing ye do is a blessing to all mankind.
Thy work is a daily psalm of praise.
In work thou canst ever find
Love's home and Church, and universe,
Messiah's blest heav'n, Mind.

(*Passing to another worker.*)

I, Nehemiah, urge thee on, these walls of
thought
Shall be constructed. All that thou hast
wrought
Must ever stand.

(*To another group.*)

Work as one man, work on,
Until mankind is saved, earth's battle won.

(*To all, as if in prayer.*)

"Be not ye afraid of them; remember the
Lord,—
And fight for your brethren, your sons, and
your daughters,
Your wives, and your houses."

(Nehemiah 4:14.)

For I am Nehemiah, "The King's Cup-
bearer."

And God, alone, is King of all the Earth.

CANTICLE IV

JEALOUSY AND DARK FOREBODINGS

DESCRIPTION: *A village of the Plain, representing a low order of thought. Everything in chaos. Rubbish of expensive materials heaped about, showing carelessness and sloth. The heat of the day.*

DISCOVERED: *SANBALLAT, governor of the Plain, is entering. He is an idol worshiper and carries with him a ghastly idol which he places with foolish awe on a high pedestal. He is a short, very heavy man, gaudily overdressed in ornate colored satin robes and much jewelry.*

SANBALLAT

(with sinister smile to the messenger who enters with him at L.)

So they rebuild those walls—poor, foolish Jews?

(Laughs a loud, derisive laugh, which is

really no laugh at all but merely an animal ejaculation.)

Bring Geshem here, at once!

(With imperial wave of large, over-decorated hand to MESSENGER)

MESSENGER

(to SANBALLAT)

Aye, Sir, I

Do thy bidding.

(exit MESSENGER)

(Enter SENSUALITY at L. A woman of deceitful expression. One who has reached maturity, but still looks artificially young. She is dressed in flaming red velvet and wears many jewels.)

SANBALLAT

(walking across to the woman and chucking her rudely under the chin)

Sweet lass, thy name?

SENSUALITY

(simpering foolishly into SANBALLAT'S face)

My name, Sir, is Sensuality.

I keep mankind in grim captivity.

SANBALLAT

(eagerly grasping her hands until the woman fairly winces under the crushing handclasp)

Hold, woman, I have work for thee to do;
Thou shalt destroy each foolish, working

Jew.

Strange how I always find the help I need
To aid me in the sowing of sin's seed!

(SANBALLAT and the woman, SENSUALITY, dance briskly about and, at the same time, laugh loudly and wickedly. They plot together. Enter several messengers. SENSUALITY breaks away from SANBALLAT and, as if giving him an exhibition of her frivolity, she slips quietly from one messenger to another, leering wickedly into each face, while she hums a foolish, sentimental love song. As she is singing, GESHEM, enters, L. He is a tall, heavy-set man, wearing the costly trappings of a ruler. SANBALLAT and GESHEM regard the woman approvingly as she sings. There are no words to the woman's song. Clashing, unrefined medley.)

GESHEM

(after SENSUALITY has ceased dancing, turns angrily to SANBALLAT and almost howls)
Why have ye sent for me, Sanballat, pray?
I am a Governor!

(With vast importance, while he struts
about nervously.)

This busy day.
I, too, have much to see to, much to do.

SANBALLAT
(*in low tone*)

Didst thou not hear how every captive Jew
Strives to rebuild the walls that lieth waste—
The waste walls of Jerusalem? Make haste
And give a plan to outwit all this task.

GESHEM
(*pondering*)

A plan? 'Tis simple! Let me think, I ask,
One moment.

(*Thinks and rubs his forehead.*)

SENSUALITY
(*interrupting*)

Let me go to them, I pray.
Each man shall bow to me. Yea, I will stay
The hands of those who work, through flat-
tery.

(SANBALLAT and GESHEM laugh loudly.)

SANBALLAT
(*delightedly*)

Poor foolish wench, thy wit is not half bad.
Our messengers will go with thee,

(*Summons messengers, who flock
about SENSUALITY.*)

And had

We other emissaries—if we know

GESHEM
(*Interrupting*)

Each Jew

Must be restrained from work.

SENSUALITY

(thinking)

If we know of any others, they should go.

(to SANBALLAT and GESHEM)

Dear Sirs, I pray thee, let me bring

My sisters. Each has way

Of evil fully learned.

SANBALLAT

(interested)

Thy sisters? Give each name,

And I will judge.

SENSUALITY

(proudly)

The younger one is Shame.

The elder one is quiet, she is Sleep.

There are but three of us, yet we can keep

Each Jew from toiling further on his task.

SANBALLAT

(to MESSENGER)

Bring hither her

(indicating SENSUALITY)

two sisters.

SENSUALITY

(to MESSENGER)

Say, I ask

Them to come quickly. We have work, this
hour

That will require united strength and power.

(MESSENGER *departs quickly at L.*)

GESHEM

(*turning to servant at his side*)

Go thou and tell those Jews who toil, that we
Desire to see them in this village here;
Tell them that we can help them, set them
free;

That we would talk with them. Tell them to
fear

Not to come hither.

SANBALLAT

(*to servant at his side*)

Tell the Jews the Plain

Is waiting for them; that the ripened grain
And fruit of all our kingdom wait. Ah me,
Why should they for those in captivity
Still toil?

BOTH SERVANTS

(*together*)

We go, Sirs.

GESHEM

(*to servants*)

Wait until the three

Sisters of sin may likewise go with thee.

(*Enter SHAME and SLEEP. They quickly embrace SENSUALITY. SHAME is dressed in deep black and walks with bowed head as if fearing to look up. SLEEP keeps her eyes closed. She is dressed in a shadowy,*

vapory-like gown.)

(to SHAME)

What canst thou do, thou sad-eyed woman,
here?

SHAME

I follow Sensuality. Men fear
My very name. I am Disease, the curse
Of sin unfettered. Couldst thou summon
worse
Than I?

GESHEM

(to SLEEP)

And thou, frail shadow, canst thou, too,
Do ought to hinder any working Jew?

SLEEP

(raising languid eyes)

My name is Sleep, and after men have well
Been bound in chains by her,

(pointing to SENSUALITY)

and her,

(indicating SHAME)

I tell

My story to them, promising that I
Will bring forgetfulness. I close each eye
Of him who listens to me, and I claim
To be a blessing, but my very shame
Is covered. I am Inactivity.
My other names are Death, Inanity.

SANBALLAT

(laughing loudly)

Ha, Ha, I see, He, He, Ha, Ha, I see!

(Waving them on.)

Go forth, ye messengers and ladies fair,
And speak to those poor working Jews o'er
there.

Bring them to us, or cause them to desist
From working.

(Patting SLEEP on shoulder.)

'Tis true, my dear, they cannot thee resist!

SANBALLAT AND GESHEM

(together)

Go forth, go forth, go forth,
Bind them, hold them, and drive them quickly
here,

Through flattery, or shame, or sleep, or fear.
Go forth, go forth, go forth.

CANTICLE V

A STRUGGLE WITH SELF

DESCRIPTION: *Same as in Canticle III except the walls are nearly repaired.*

DISCOVERED: NEHEMIAH *and all the workers at their tasks on the walls.*

(*enter* FIRST MESSENGER)

FIRST MESSENGER

My Lord, Sanballat, Governor of Plain,
Hath sent me to thee. He would once again
Hold counsel with Cupbearer of the King.

(*Endeavoring to lead NEHEMIAH away.*)

(NEHEMIAH *draws back as if refusing to go.*)
Sanballat, sir,

(*insistently*)

has counselled me to bring
Thee to him that thou may'st together talk
These matters over.

(NEHEMIAH *draws back.*)

No, thou need'st not walk.
I have Sanballat's chariot.

(*All workers stop working on the walls and listen to the conversation between NEHEMIAH and the messenger.*)

NEHEMIAH

But I am doing here a great work. Answer
why

This work should cease, the while I go to talk
With them?

(Turning back to his work.)

Tell them I shall ne'er walk
Nor ride to them. This good work must not
cease!

(A second messenger hurriedly enters, L.)

SECOND MESSENGER

(as if pointing to the Plain—to NEHEMIAH)
I bear a message, too; I bring thee peace,
From Geshem, Governor, my Lord;
And he hath sent me forth to bring this word
To thee. Come down, he begs of thee to-day,
And talk this good work over, and the way
Of progress.

NEHEMIAH

(firmly)

Sir, no work was ever done
Through useless talk.

'Tis better, one by one,
That we should learn to work, and not to say
How we have worked. I cannot come today,
Nor any other time.

(Turns back to his work; all begin hammering together)

(Enter SENSUALITY. She goes straight to NEHEMIAH, and through pantomime, attempts vainly to entice him with her eyes. NEHEMIAH looks away from her

and continues his work. She next tries to hold his face close to hers. He eludes her attempted embraces. Discouraged at NEHEMIAH'S repulses, she then goes to the other men. One by one they drop their tools and half return her caresses. NEHEMIAH alone repulses SENSUALITY each time she returns to him. He continues his work. Not a word is spoken. Every time one of the workers drops his tools because of SENSUALITY'S caresses, the daughters of SHALLUM appear and restore them to the idle hands.)

SENSUALITY

..(in final attempt to gain NEHEMIAH'S attention)

Come,

(whispering)

Come with me,

I will give thee ease

And joy and gladness.

Wouldst thou not for these

Lay down this heavy anvil?

(pointing to tool)

NEHEMIAH

(firmly)

No, for I, Cupbearer of the King, must ever try

To do my best.

SENSUALITY

(Gently stroking NEHEMIAH'S hands.)

Thou art so brave, my dear.

It is thy bravery I love.

(Still caressing his hands.)

These wondrous hands! How they have
wrought!

Ah, do not fear

My fond caresses.

(NEHEMIAH brushes her aside and quickly begins work on the walls. SENSUALITY, seeing that it is useless to try to win NEHEMIAH, softly steals again to the other men, who are watching her with jealous glances. NEHEMIAH works on. SENSUALITY flits from one to another and casts her spell over each of them in turn. They rapturously return her caresses. Seeing that she has all of the workers, except NEHEMIAH, in her power, SENSUALITY quickly summons SHAME and SLEEP, who are standing quietly at L.)

SHAME

*(to one of the workers who has been holding
SENSUALITY in his arms)*

My name is Sister Shame. Each working Jew
Shall be inactive. Yea, let me renew
My boast. Not one shall work, for I

Shall make each one afraid. Each man shall
try

To shake me off!

(She hovers like a cloud over the tired workers; with one hand she summons SLEEP.)

Come, Sleep; come, Sister Sleep,

My work is finished!

(The hands of the men drop listlessly.)

Now I pray thee keep

These hands from toiling, and these eyes
from light.

My work is finished!

(The men drop their heads in shame.)

Lead to blackest night

These earnest Jews.

(SLEEP approaches the men. They reach out their arms to her as if begging her to come to them. They yawn stupidly and sigh.)

SLEEP

(surprised)

I—I have naught to do!

Shame, Sensuality, hath bound each Jew!

(They all nod their heads in sleep except the daughters of SHALLUM and NEHEMIAH, who work diligently on. The eldest daughter of SHALLUM approaches NEHEMIAH. He is so busily engaged in work that he has not noticed the sleeping toilers.)

(to NEHEMIAH)

THE ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SHALLUM

(to NEHEMIAH)

Cupbearer, awake those stupid Jews who
sleep!

NEHEMIAH

(regarding the sleepers)

Our God shall fight for us.

Yea, He shall keep

Our hands from idleness.

(to DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM)

The trumpet sound!

(Loud blowing of trumpet.)

They shall awake!

(Men begin to awaken.)

Their better selves when found

Shall keep them. Daughters, tell them they
shall be

Both male and female, joyous, sinless, free.

(DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM go quickly and
awaken the men more fully, merely by
placing the workers' own discarded
weapons and tools in their listless hands.)

(All the men arise, look about in startled
manner and continue the work quietly.
With a spear in one hand and a weapon
in the other, each daughter of SHALLUM
stands back of every group of men as a
faithful guard.)

Tell them,

(to DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM)

I pray thee, each with servant may
At night lodge in Jerusalem. The way
Grows brighter; toilers, we are not afraid.
God hath made "good" all things that He
hath made.

(NEHEMIAH rises suddenly, as if with inspiration, and seizes first one messenger and then another. He roughly shakes each, in turn, and tears off outer garment.)

This messenger

(indicating SANBALLAT'S messenger)

that we have dreaded, see,
Is Intuition in disguise; was she
Not Sight?

INTUITION

The ills we deem dark woes may be,
When overcome, a guide to lead to light.

NEHEMIAH

(shaking second messenger until outer
covering falls)

And this one, well thou know'st, was one time
Taste.

PATIENCE

And now my name is Patience.

NEHEMIAH

Thou, alas,

Art messenger who teaches us to waste
No time in murmuring.

PATIENCE

(as if holding aloft a cup)

Taste of life's cup,
Of grief or joy, let not this chalice pass!

NEHEMIAH

*(Looking SENSUALITY squarely in the eye;
her outer garment falls, revealing a beautiful woman.)*

Ah, thou art Gratitude! Thou troubl'st me
So long to-day as Touch! This is the curse
Of all earth's curses, mankind fears as worse
Than Death. The touch of Touch brings
bitter woe

Because it claims to hold, caress, and go
From life to death.

GRATITUDE

Yea, I am Gratitude!

I best express myself by giving much
To all mankind.

NEHEMIAH

(pondering)

So thou wert one time Touch!
Can this be why, in future years, there is
Destined to come a King to earth?—and this
Shall be his message: Gratitude and Peace!

(as if prophesying)

Yea, he will raise the dead with words like
these:

“Father, I thank Thee!” Men shall even
know

The garment’s hem he wears shall heal their
woe.

If they but reach out for the Truth, they
shall

Be freed forever from the galling thrall
Of sensuality, which comes to bind
Mankind with touch of finite love.

(to all)

We find

Our freedom, friends, forever as we give
Our all of gratitude that men may live.

Egyptian darkness, sensuality,
The touch of finite self,—from these, be free,
(eagerly to GRATITUDE)

Mankind! Blest Gratitude, no name like thine
Hath ever turned earth’s water into wine!

(To SHAME, as outer garment falls.)

Ah, thou wert Smell!

CHARITY

But now I come to bless
Earth in the robes of Charity.

NEHEMIAH

’Tis true

Thou dost not scent sin’s scandal, nor confess

To curious interest in an old or new
Recital of men's weaknesses. Thou art
The friend of all.

(For a long time, NEHEMIAH regards SLEEP. She does not change. SLEEP constantly eludes the Cupbearer's steadfast, searching look. While NEHEMIAH is actually trying to "see through" SLEEP, and SLEEP is trying to evade the Prophet, HEARING, now WAKEFULNESS, dressed in loose, flowing white garments, slips quietly into the room, and takes her place with the other four guards at NEHEMIAH's side. SLEEP, beholding WAKEFULNESS' appearance, shudders and makes quick exit. NEHEMIAH, turning, beholds WAKEFULNESS, and embraces her lovingly.)

Brave Wakefulness, my friend!

Thou art the friend of friends which God
doth send!

WAKEFULNESS

(reassuringly, to NEHEMIAH)

Blest Cupbearer, I come to-day to hear
For thee. There is nor pain, nor any fear!

NEHEMIAH

(gratefully, regarding the five women)

Ah, this one here

(holding WAKEFULNESS' hand)

is friend, indeed,—'tis she,

True Wakefulness, come to us now that we
May keep awake and set our brethren free.
(*At this moment, heavy-eyed SLEEP appears
again, L. She yawns stupidly; seems
about to enter but is apparently afraid
of WAKEFULNESS.*)

WAKEFULNESS

(*pointing derisively at SLEEP, who cowers to
the ground and almost creeps out of sight*)
Sleep hath no better self. She hath a need
To hide herself! Death is her cruel creed.
My friend,

(*to NEHEMIAH*)

there yet are days of grief and woe
When death, or sleep, will try to make thee
go

As fettered slave to hell—but thou shalt see
The world's great need of immortality,
And, seeing this, thou shalt, indeed, be free!

NEHEMIAH

(*to all*)

Half of thee hold'st the spears

(*to the women*)

Until each star in highest heav'n appears.
While half shall work.

(*To the men. They all return joyously
to their work on the wall.*)

The way
Grows ever brighter to us. Father, pray

That none of us may falter, till we see
Man is both male and female, deathless, free.

(As if in prophecy.)

I see on earth, in long, long years to come,
Half of thee shalt, indeed, protect the home;
While half shall win earth's peace—this is
God's will!

The home thou shalt protect is consciousness;
The wakefulness all men express shall bless
This earth-home with true, patient tender-
ness.

The intuition of our God shall be
Made manifest! Blest gratitude shall free
Earth's fettered ones; and charity shall stand
Prepared to lend to all a helping hand.
There shall be no more war, nor hate, nor
strife

Within earth's home in heav'n,—this is
Life!

CANTICLE VI

A STRUGGLE WITH POVERTY AND GREED

DESCRIPTION: *The scene is again as in Canticles III and V, the partly constructed walls of Jerusalem. About six weeks later in time than Canticle V.*

DISCOVERED: *Groups of discontented Jews standing about engaged in angry conversation. Groups of anxious women and fretful children. The women wearily shift baskets of corn and wine from their arms to their heads. They sigh disconsolately.)*

SHEMAIAH

(discontentedly)

We, our sons and daughters, many are!
That we may live, we take up corn and wine.
Yea, we have borrowed money from afar
That this work might proceed.
Indeed, our fine
Of tax is great!

WIFE OF SHEMAIAH

(sullenly)

Why should this work go on, when, day by
day,

Our debt grows larger?

MESHULLAM

(kicking at wall)

We have naught to pay!

*(Groups of angry men walk about and kick at
wall as if they would destroy it.)*

We have encumbered vineyards,—
all our lands!

MEREMOTH

(fiercely)

And this is all we have!

(Pointing derisively at wall.)

My very hands

Are wearied.

BAVAI

(peevishly)

I mortgaged all my lands—I
Have naught more.

WIFE OF BAVAI

(weeping)

I know it!

(rocking back and forth)

I know it! Ah,

I weep and sigh
But no one cares.

BINNUI

Yet our flesh is exactly as the flesh

Of our own brethren, our children, too,
And their children. Would we them enmesh,
Our sons and daughters, into bondage?

*(Angrily approaches NEHEMIAH, who
alone continues to build.)*

Jew,

Speak up! Some are already bought
With no power to redeem

(savagely)

and thou hast wrought

This mischief!

*(At one side, an auctioneer is asking for bids
on the children. The rulers make va-
rious offers.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(rising slowly from his work and towering
above all)*

Not as they seem

Are countless ills to-day.

*(Turns to messenger and summons nobles
and rulers who are engaged in bidding on
children. They crowd about NEHEMIAH.)*

Men, I pray,

Listen, and find at once a better way
To meet each need. Thou dost exact in whole
Usury of thy brethren, and thy toll
Is death. Our brethren, the Jews redeemed
shall be,

Not in some far-off time, but now and here.

They, sold unto the heathen, shall be free
From cursed debt, disease, and human fear.

*(Shaking his clenched fists into the
faces of the rulers.)*

And wouldst thou even sell thy brethren
For stupid ease? Quick, answer me, my men!
*(There is a long silence. The rulers and
nobles stand with bowed heads, as if
ashamed.)*

Shall they be sold for us; canst thou not say
A word—not even one? There is none, nay
Not one to e'er condone this usury.

(All men stand with heads lowered.)

*(NEHEMIAH walks back to the wall as if his
words to the rulers were finished; he
picks up an anvil and gives a few ringing
strokes, and then suddenly faces about
and paces his way back to the silent men.)*

“It is not good that ye do; ought ye not
To walk in the fear of our God, because of
The reproach of the heathen, our enemies?
I likewise, and my brethren, and my serv-
ants,

Might exact of them money and corn;
I pray you, let us leave off this usury.
Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day,
Their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards,
And their houses, also the hundredth part

Of the money, and of the corn, the wine,
And of the oil, that ye exact of them”

(Nehemiah 5:9, 10, 11.)

(A long silence. The women are standing beside the rulers with baskets of corn and wine half extended to them. The rulers reach out their hands to receive the baskets, but as they listen to NEHEMIAH'S words, their empty hands drop back to their sides.)

SHALLUM

(speaking for all)

“We will restore them, and will require
nothing of them ;

So will we do as thou sayest.”

(Nehemiah 5:12.)

NEHEMIAH

(to messenger)

Go, call the priests, an oath we'll take of this
That they should do according to their
promise.

(Shakes lap as if emptying it of something.)

“So God shake out every man from his house,
And from his labour, that performeth not
this promise,

Even thus be he shaken out and emptied.”

(Nehemiah 5:13.)

ALL

(*together*)

Amen! Praise the Lord! God be praised!

NEHEMIAH

(*with hand uplifted*)

At my table now I entertain

One hundred-fifty Jews:

The fruit and grain

Of governors we eat not. Think of me,

O, Lord, Thou God of good, Grant that I be

A faithful servant till this wall shall stand

A worthy tribute to our Father's hand.

"Think upon me, my God, for good,

According to all that I have done

For this people"—(Nehemiah 5:19.)

CANTICLE VII

A DESPERATE STRUGGLE WITH SELF

DESCRIPTION: *Showing walls completed except doors.*

DISCOVERED: NEHEMIAH *stands alone looking at the opening where doors should be.*

(*Enter PRIDE OF ACHIEVEMENT, a messenger from SANBALLAT. PRIDE says nothing. He struts about looking at wall. Whistles proudly.*)

PRIDE

(*to NEHEMIAH*)

Splendid work! Marvelous! Indeed, I won-

der, friend,
At all thou and these Jews have done. Pray
lend
An ear. My governor, Sanballat, sends thee
peace
And joy. He would, himself, convey to thee
these greetings.

(looking at wall)

Wondrous! My friend,
didst thou do all,
Thou and these Jews? It seems, indeed, this
wall
Is built to stand. I marvel at thy might,
Thy wondrous skill in building this aright!

NEHEMIAH

*(For a moment, he listens eagerly. A dazed,
stupid expression steals across his face.
With a gesture, as if pushing the words
of PRIDE away from him, he speaks slowly
—to himself.)*

“O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek
thee;
My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth
for Thee,
To see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have
seen Thee
In the sanctuary
When I remember Thee upon my bed,
And meditate on Thee in the night watches.

Because Thou hast been my help,
Therefore in the shadow of Thy wings
Will I rejoice." (Ps. 63:1-7.)

*(Enter a driver and golden chariot; a richly
trapped beast. A footman and messenger
are close at hand.)*

MESSENGER

(to PRIDE)

My lord, I wait; and art thou ready quite?
If so, we'll journey onward, e'er 'tis night.

PRIDE

(pleadingly to NEHEMIAH)

Come down with me. Sanballat waits to hear
Thy mighty conquest over sin and fear.
Come with me, friend.

NEHEMIAH

(resolutely)

"I am doing a great work,
So that I cannot come down;
Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it,
And—come—down—to—you?"

(Nehemiah 6:3.)

PRIDE

(insisting)

They wait for thee at Ono.

NEHEMIAH

Let them wait! I have a work. Yea, I know
It must continue.

PRIDE

(pointing to wall)

To tell them of this dost thou refuse to go?
Come with me to the village of Ono.

NEHEMIAH

"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot
come down;

Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it,
And come down to you?"

(Nehemiah 6:3.)

*(The driver slowly turns the chariot around;
the footman, the messenger and PRIDE
follow. They exeunt while NEHEMIAH
slowly repeats:)*

"Why should the work cease, whilst I leave
it,

And come down to you?"

*(Four men enter carrying mortar-trough;
after placing it, they exeunt.)*

*(NEHEMIAH turns back to the contemplation
of the work on the wall. PREJUDICE, a
messenger from SANBALLAT, enters, al-
most creeps about, and whispers as if
frightened. Goes up to mortar which NE-
HEMIAH is mixing, and looks at it fear-
fully.)*

Some one has mixed this mortar wrong, my
friend,

Sh— what have I said. I did not mean to tell

That shameful plot.

NEHEMIAH

A plot ye say? Pray lend
Assistance in unraveling it.
(NEHEMIAH *ceases his work and appears to
be much disturbed.*)

PREJUDICE

Meshullam, Zadok, Ezra, ah, for shame
I should not speak of this! I would not say
One word to turn thee from thy friendships,
nay,
Not one word; but (*whispering*), 'twas Shal-
lum said to me
That ye were hard task-master! Ah, I see
I have been wrong in telling this.
(*As if repentant.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*continuing his mixing of mortar*)

Alas, thy name
Is prejudice*! (*pointing to exit*) Go! Thou
may'st pass
Forever from my sight! Thou canst not tell
The light from darkness. Go, the gates of
hell
Swing back for such as thee.

(PREJUDICE, *muttering, starts to leave.*)

PREJUDICE

I wouldst not turn.
Thee e'er against a brother, but, I yearn

* When Nehemiah perceives that evil is impersonal, the
word typifying evil is not capitalized.

To tell thee how Hanani says that thou
Sh— art basely wrong—Sh, what have I
spoken now?

NEHEMIAH

*(dropping his mortar mixer, he places hands
over ears so that he cannot hear)*

Of all the messengers Sanballat prides,
Thou art the falsest one,—yea, thou! Death
hides

Behind thy muttered murmurings! Go now
From me—Ah, never more shalt thou
Deceive me, crafty, whispering abuse,
Thy name is prejudice, and I refuse
To listen to thee, coward! Whispering,
Go back to hades whence thy lispings spring.
I shall rely on God to tell me all
About my fellow-man. *(lifting eyes)*

On Him I call
For righteous judgment! God, alone, is
good,

And, in His sight, man now is understood!
One day, a singer comes to earth to say:
“Our feet shall stand” within Jerusalem
Where human prejudice hath no more sway.
“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”

(Psalms 122:6.)

(Exit PREJUDICE.)

(HUMAN RECOGNITION, a messenger from

GESHEM *enters, unobserved, and stands close to NEHEMIAH'S side while he works.*)

HUMAN RECOGNITION

My name is Human Recognition, friend.

I never hesitate gladly to lend

My aid. Geshem commissions me to say

He would reward thee for thy work to-day—

Yea, he will lavish all that thou wouldst ask

For having carried through this wondrous task.

Come down to Ono, village of the Plain.

And he will give thee lands of ripened grain.

I gladly lend my name to every one

Because my title is so justly won.

Cupbearer, if it be to thee the same

We will be going now.

(Taking NEHEMIAH by the arm.)

NEHEMIAH

(as if brushing aside a troublesome viper)

Why go with thee?

HUMAN RECOGNITION

To get thy full reward. Friend, thou shalt be
A ruler.

NEHEMIAH

(firmly)

I have reward. None can tell

Save God alone, my recompense, how well

I am repaid.

HUMAN RECOGNITION

But it is fully right
That governors should tell thee of thy might
And wisdom.

NEHEMIAH

(hands raised to heaven)

“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son
of man, in whom there is no help.

His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his
earth;

In that very day his thoughts perish.

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for
his help,

Whose hope is in the Lord his God;

Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and
all that therein is; which keepeth truth
forever.”

(Ps. 146:3-6.)

*(About the middle of the Psalm, GESHEM'S
messenger, HUMAN RECOGNITION, slowly
departs. NEHEMIAH, alone, again turns
to view the wall.)*

SHIFTLESSNESS

*(sauntering in, walks up to the mortar and
looks at it sneeringly—to NEHEMIAH)*

What is this? Ah, mortar? Then why mind
Mixing this so?

(NEHEMIAH is carefully placing in the lime.)

Cast it in!

(Knocks NEHEMIAH'S elbow so that the lime

slips carelessly in. Laughs.)

Cast it in!

This will last after thou art dead and gone.

Cast it in!

(jostling shovel)

Cast it in, why stand alone

For such exactness?

(NEHEMIAH, saying nothing, goes to the wall and carefully measures the opening of a gate. SHIFTLESSNESS follows him and jeers at him.)

Never mind measuring;

Cast it in.

(NEHEMIAH picks up the heavy gate which belongs in the opening.)

Who cares how it fits?

Ah, bring

Thy talents to the things that count,—this gate

Is merely iron! It can have no fate—

'Tis lifeless metal! Though it fit not, why Shouldst thou then care? Why shouldst thou even try?

(SHIFTLESSNESS saunters about; carelessly knocks down one gate after another and kicks each about. Crashing noises.)

NEHEMIAH

Ah, shiftlessness, we two have met before.

Thou may'st leave!

(points to exit)

I would not listen more
To all thy foolish prattle.

(pushing him away)

I am here
To do my best. Thou canst not interfere.
Of all the messengers that Geshem sent
Thou art the one whose crookedness hath bent
Men from the line of rectitude. Thy ways
Are not God's ways. For this, let Him be
praised!

(exit SHIFTLESSNESS)

(A woman, dressed in many dull colors, enters. She is SELF-PITY. She slowly approaches NEHEMIAH, and raising his calloused hands, looks at them, and shakes her head pityingly.)

SELF-PITY

I cannot give my name. I came from one
Who tells me of the marvels thou hast done.
And not one Jew hath praised thee!

(She takes NEHEMIAH'S hands very tenderly
in her own and gently rubs her hands
over them, as if feeling their callouses.)

Poor hands, true,
Toiled long, in vain, for not one grateful Jew
Hath stayed to bless thee! Tobiah says that
he
Would give thee his thanks in sincerity.

Poor hands! Poor hands!

(She continues to rub them gently. For a moment, NEHEMIAH almost weeps. He quickly recovers himself, and snatches his hands away.)

NEHEMIAH

(peering into woman's face)

What is thy name? Where have we met before?

Thou hast annoyed me much in days of yore!
"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.

Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it,
And—come—down—to—you?"

SELF-PITY

But thou shouldst have reward. Thou toil'st
but they,

Those Jews (*scornfully*) are neither grateful
nor obey

Thy word.

NEHEMIAH

(almost assents, but quickly turning away from the woman for a moment, regards his work on the wall. Again turning to the woman.)

What is thy name? Where have we met before?

Thou hast annoyed me much in days of yore.
(Turning again to the wall, and disregarding

the woman, he begins measuring, as he intones these words from Psalm 78:)

"Give ear, O My people, to My law;
Incline your ears to the words of My mouth.
I will open My mouth in a parable:
I will utter dark sayings of old:
That the generations to come might know
them,
Even the children which should be born;
Who should arise and declare them to their
children."

*(In the midst of the intonation of this Psalm,
SELF-PITY, weeping bitterly, stands be-
fore NEHEMIAH.)*

SELF-PITY

(to NEHEMIAH)

I am Self-Pity. I did not intend
To give my name. I came disguised as friend.
(weeping)

But I am deadly foe. Yea, oft before
I have annoyed thee in the days of yore.
(Weeping bitterly, SELF-PITY exits.)

NEHEMIAH

(kneeling)

God be praised! Magnify His holy name!
Once more, Thy servant is redeemed from
shame.

*(Enter a wondrously beautiful woman. She
is PERSONAL ATTRACTION. NEHEMIAH is*

working earnestly when she enters, but he immediately becomes excited and confused. It is evident that he is doing poor work. All the time he looks admiringly at the woman. He drops his tools; the gate he is hammering into place crashes to the ground and, in its fall, tears a part of the wall away. Neither NEHEMIAH nor the woman speak. As if delighting in her conquest and NEHEMIAH'S failure to work intelligently, the woman smiles joyously and exits. With a disappointed expression, and looking ever toward the door whence PERSONAL ATTRACTION had departed, NEHEMIAH wearily takes up his work. Enter the five senses—SIGHT, TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL, HEARING. The five men stand near NEHEMIAH as if to encourage him to continue his work. Again the woman, PERSONAL ATTRACTION, appears. She is more beautiful than ever in a robe of shimmering material. NEHEMIAH gasps delightedly when he sees the woman. He tries to return to his work, but it is plain that his work disgusts him, and that he has eyes only for the beautiful creature who stands near him. The woman, seeing NEHEMIAH'S displeasure

with his work, laughs joyously and departs. The five corporeal senses look heavenward as if in prayer. Again the woman enters. She is even more beautiful than before, having thrown a rope of wondrous jewels about her neck and a fleecy, silken shawl upon her head. When NEHEMIAH sees her enter, he ceases work entirely and looks unceasingly at the woman. He sits down on a pile of building material. The five senses bring him, first a hammer, then a trowel, then a joist. They try to encourage him to go on with his work but he refuses. He does nothing except to stare admiringly at PERSONAL ATTRACTION. Finally, NEHEMIAH gives one quick glance heavenward as if in prayer. At once the spell of mesmeric attraction is broken. In a moment's time, the gleaming robes fall at the woman's feet, showing an ugly creature dressed in sack-cloth. The five senses change again to beautiful women. NEHEMIAH rises quickly from his reclining position and with eager joy begins his work. He intelligently repairs the large gap in the wall caused by PERSONAL ATTRACTION'S first appearance. PERSONAL ATTRACTION, now in sack-cloth, ugly and old,

tries to keep NEHEMIAH from working. She goes to him, attempts to seize his hands and hold him with her gaze, but her efforts are all in vain. Joyously NEHEMIAH continues to work.)

NEHEMIAH

(to the woman)

God be praised! I know thy heinous name,—
'Tis personal attraction, lust and shame!
Whene'er thou comest first, clad in the flesh
Of costly, vain attraction ye enmesh
Thy victims, well thou keepest them from
gain
Of true salvation through thy crafty, vain
attentions.
The second time thou com'st, men loathe their
work;
Their days become a useless drag; they shirk
all honest duty.
The third time thou dost come, men cease
their toil,—
Thou bind'st upon them fetters, coil on coil.
The world of useful joy would pass away,
If thou, poor foolish virgin, hadst thy say;
But as men lift their eyes to heav'n and pray
The joy of work comes forth into the light,—
And thou art then a monster in their sight!
Go from me, woman, never, never more
Shalt thou appear to darken my own door

Of thought. My daily work is all I need;
My work is my attraction and my meed
Of joy and peace and happiness and rest!

(as he pushes the woman away)

Woman, for me, my work is ever best.

(The woman, weeping bitterly, exits.)

(NEHEMIAH continues his work. The five senses now changed into the women, GRATITUDE, PATIENCE, CHARITY, WAKEFULNESS and INTUITION, with hands raised as if blessing NEHEMIAH, all leave.)

(Enter HUMAN WILL. At first sight, he appears to be a very small man, but he increases constantly in size as he speaks. HUMAN WILL is accompanied by his son, DISHONESTY, and his daughter, GREED. DISHONESTY is very cowardly in appearance. GREED is large and florid.)

HUMAN WILL

(breathlessly to NEHEMIAH)

This will not do! Come, come with me, my friend,

Thou must come now. I say so. Wherefore bend

Thy back in labor when I summon thee?

(NEHEMIAH is fitting a gate in place.)

Not there! Not there!

(Indicating disapproval of placing gate

in that opening.)

Come with me now. Why be
So earnest?

(HUMAN WILL *takes NEHEMIAH by the
shoulder and pushes him about.*)

Go there!

(pushing him to another place)

Go on *(pushing him)* Go!

I said there! *(angrily)* Not there! There!

There! No,

Not there!

*(Pushing NEHEMIAH about, HUMAN WILL
appears to be utterly exhausted.)*

Not there! *(wearily)* I said so! *(Very
wearily)* I—said—so.

*(DISHONESTY is attempting to displace good
building material with defective timbers;
good stones with mere lumps of sand
which fairly crumble away. GREED has-
tens about and picks up bolts, nails, tools
and many other valuables and hides them
in her flowing sleeves.)*

NEHEMIAH

Mark thy dishonest children, mark the greed
(pointing to GREED)

And avarice of her, and mark the need
Thy son, Dishonesty, hath now to go
With wiser vision or—

(DISHONESTY stumbles and falls)

HUMAN WILL

(turning to his children)

Ah, I did not know

She (*pointing to GREED*) was a thief, a robber; ah, me!

And he (*pointing to DISHONESTY*) deceitful, crafty, tell me, can it be?

(*DISHONESTY picks himself up. HUMAN WILL weeps.*)

NEHEMIAH

Thy name is human will. Should I not know
Thy falsity? Hast thou not led me on
O'er crag and fen of self, in days long gone?
I know thy name.

(*HUMAN WILL still weeps bitterly. His two children steal quietly from the stage.*)

I know the weariness
Of thy poor counsels; yea, thy faithlessness!
Of all his messengers, Sanballat's curse
Hath never made of villany, a worse
Than thou. I know thee, human will; I
know——

I know thy wretched leadings—Go, Go, Go!

(*HUMAN WILL continues to weep, pleadingly and with false meekness, to NEHEMIAH.*)

I shall abide with thee, here, here, now, now,
Until thou goest with me, thou, thou, thou,
thou!

(with feigned gentleness)

I do not want my way; come, thou, with me.

NEHEMIAH

False meekness, human will, thou dost assume,

Since in thy scheming heart thou hast but room

For self. Father, thy will be done!

(At these words, HUMAN WILL falls at NEHEMIAH'S feet.)

With Thee,

I go where Truth directs. Yea, I am free

To go where Love commands! There dwell-
eth I,

As God's own image.

HUMAN WILL

(looking up from the ground)

Come with me. Oh, why

Not go?

NEHEMIAH

(resolutely)

I go where God directs the way.

No human will can have the power to say
Where I should go, or where my work shall
be;

The God in heav'n, alone, instructeth me.

*(HUMAN WILL appears to completely flatten
out on the ground at NEHEMIAH'S feet.)*

He is wholly exhausted and, in his ex-

haustion, his tongue protrudes as if he were fairly eating the dust of the earth.)
Thou art sin's serpent, doomed to eat the dust
(HUMAN WILL *is creeping away*)

Of cannot, do not, shall, and will, and must.

HUMAN WILL

(muttering to himself as he creeps away)
I shall, I will, I can, I must now go
Back to perdition, human will and woe.

NEHEMIAH

(as if prophesying)

One comes in future days to do God's will.
(As if beholding someone present, radiantly.)
He stills earth's tempests with Love's "Peace,
be still!"

(As these last words are spoken, HUMAN WILL, silenced, exits by creeping away.)

(Enter PERSONALITY. He is a very large, clumsy, awkward, pompous man. He is constantly tripping as if over himself and falling. He stands before NEHEMIAH, who is working, and suddenly falls before him. NEHEMIAH in turn stumbles over PERSONALITY, but does not fall. Each time NEHEMIAH stumbles and makes a misstep, some of his good work is overturned.)

PERSONALITY

Here am I! See me! Here am I! See me!

Here am I! Can it be, can it be
Thou dost not see me?

NEHEMIAH

*(stumbling over PERSONALITY, but not
falling)*

I detected thee!

*(PERSONALITY repeatedly places himself in
NEHEMIAH'S way, but each time the Cup-
bearer sees the impostor and quickly steps
aside to avoid falling over him.)*

PERSONALITY

Why step aside for me? Thou art afraid!
(exultingly)

NEHEMIAH

(firmly)

Ah, no, God made all things that were made!

PERSONALITY

God? I *(indicating himself)* am creator, I
am wondrous, I——

NEHEMIAH

(interrupting)

Thou'rt false from the beginning, yea, sin's
lie!

PERSONALITY

Thou callest me false, then I shall go. Not
here

May I remain! I must have awe and fear!

*(PERSONALITY, much offended, rises majes-
tically and exits)*

(Enter HUMAN EASE, a large, very fleshy woman. She goes straight to the gate NEHEMIAH is working on, and reclines wearily upon it. She sighs.)

NEHEMIAH
(to the woman)

Begone!

(HUMAN EASE sighs and rests more easily on the gate.)

Begone!

(HUMAN EASE sighs wearily and refuses to move.)

What (peering into the woman's face) is thy name, pray tell?

HUMAN EASE

My name is Human Ease.

(NEHEMIAH tries to move her.)

With me 'tis well,

Why should I move? I like it here—to rest
Is my one business,—that is ever best!

NEHEMIAH

(Laughs long and joyously. Continues to work while he laughs happily. EASE sighs, and sighs, and looks disturbed over NEHEMIAH'S laughter.)

HUMAN EASE

Why dost thou work and laugh? Why work?
Alas!

(She rises wearily from her couch of build-

*ing material and appears much annoyed as
NEHEMIAH continues to work and laugh.)*

I cannot live with work!

(Brushing wearily past NEHEMIAH.)

Knave, let me pass!

(exit HUMAN EASE)

*(Enter JEALOUSY. She is a deceitful looking
woman with face wreathed in vain smiles.
She approaches NEHEMIAH and looks
with sinister smiles at his work.)*

JEALOUSY

Why this is Nehemiah? *(with surprise)*

Long ago

I knew thee. We were friends, dost thou
recall

Those days in Babylon? I little knew
That thou wouldst prove a master over all
This mighty work!

(Smiling with pained expression.)

No one is more rejoiced than I am, friend,
At all thy progress!

(As if trying to convince herself of her joy.)

Ah, I am so glad

Thou dost so well, my friend; and if I had
My way, I would confer on thee all good!

I am not jealous,—all is understood
With me. No one could wish thee more than I
Of great success!

(As if determined he would believe her.)

So glad—so glad, friend! Why
This vast success?

NEHEMIAH

(not looking up from his work)

I know thy voice! Thy face I have not seen!
Thy words spell J-e-a-l-o-u-s-y. I have not
been

Deceived by all thou say'st of my success,—
I know full well, thou lovest me no less
Than this work I would do. Go from me, go,
Admiring jealousy. Thou canst not know
The purpose of my days. Why shouldst thou
tell

Me pleasing nothings of my work, when hell
Is where ye wish to drag me?

(Lifting his eyes in prayer.)

Ah, 'tis true

"Of mine own self, I do no thing," one prays,
In future years:

(as if in prophesy)

"Yea, I forever do

(JEALOUSY *with poisoned, admiring glances
exits*)

That which the Father does;" indeed, God's
ways

Are higher than my thoughts.

*(Raising high his hands as if he were fairly
lifted up from the earth)*

Father, thanks, praise!

(NEHEMIAH turns again to the wall. An officious woman enters and approaches him. She wears a very anxious expression. She is IDOLATRY.)

IDOLATRY

(looking longingly at NEHEMIAH. He turns away from her with expression of annoyance and hatred. NEHEMIAH drops a tool. IDOLATRY picks it up and at the same time breaks a very valuable tool which is close at hand. NEHEMIAH angrily pushes the woman aside. IDOLATRY quickly measures a gate for him with no degree of exactness.)

I idolize thee, friend. This work ye do
I would do for thee.

NEHEMIAH

(much annoyed—to IDOLATRY)

No! (pushing her roughly aside). Vain, vain
Idolatry. Speak not to me again.

(NEHEMIAH continues working, but at every turn IDOLATRY interrupts his efforts with over-solicitous attention. Firmly, to NEHEMIAH.)

I shall not give thee up! Thy angry pride
At my attentions——

NEHEMIAH

(interrupting)

Go from me! (angrily). This wide

World surely furnisheth enough of space
So that I never need to see thy face!
I loathe thee! I despise thee, fiendish curse!
Of all sin's leeches, none was ever worse!

IDOLATRY

(pleased at curses, smiling)

I idolize thee! Nothing thou canst say
Shall ever turn my love for thee away.

NEHEMIAH

(scornfully)

Thy love for me! Thou hind'r'st all I do!
Thy love for me! No word of this is true!
Thy useless, harmful hindrances I hate!

IDOLATRY

Ah, I am used to curses. Yea, I wait
For thy attentions——

(to NEHEMIAH)

(interrupting)

My attentions! No!

Thou shalt have none from me—thou woman,
go!

(IDOLATRY brings a heavy mantle and wraps it closely about NEHEMIAH so that he cannot lift his hands to his work. With great effort, he casts the cloak aside.)

IDOLATRY

(trying again to wrap the mantle about NEHEMIAH, who continues to cast it aside)

Ah, it is cold, my friend, and thou shalt be

Forever blessed and comforted by me.
I am Idolatry, close Family Tie,
I shall not leave thee, dear, till thou shalt die.
I am the finite love of those who fear
For thee. I shall be ever, ever near.
*(throwing her arms closely about NEHE-
MIAH'S neck, she clings tenaciously to him)*
Thee all thy life.

NEHEMIAH

*(with agonized expression, lifts his eyes to
heaven in prayer. He does not lift a hand
to shake the woman from him, although
he shows in every expression his longing
to be free from her.)*

There is one God, above,
Father, I thank Thee that Thy law is love.
I thank Thee, Father!

*(IDOLATRY loosens her arms from NEHEMI-
AH'S neck. With surprise, to NEHEMIAH)*

Have I heard aright?
Thou used to curse me, now within my sight
Thou giv'st thanks!

NEHEMIAH

(unconscious of IDOLATRY)

Father of love, I thank Thee!

IDOLATRY

*(as if determined to win NEHEMIAH'S at-
tentions. Peering into his face)*

Dear, dost thou see me, too?

Give me thy curses, love, pray do, pray do!

NEHEMIAH

(refusing to see IDOLATRY)

Who is so great a God as the One good?

With Him, alone, all things are understood!

IDOLATRY

(desperately)

Hast thou no curse to give me, dear? My life

Is nourished with vain curses, idle strife.

(pleadingly)

Give me abuse! Hatred my portion is

Since time began, and, ah, I feed on this!

NEHEMIAH

(looking heavenward)

Who is so great a God as God in heav'n?

IDOLATRY

(beseechingly)

I need thy curses, dear, let them be giv'n

That I may live! Idolatry, indeed,

Feasts on harsh words. Scorn is her hourly
need.

NEHEMIAH

(patiently, looking heavenward)

Who is so great a God as God above,

E'en though I dwell in hell, God still is Love.

IDOLATRY

(clinging closely to NEHEMIAH)

Ah, I am sure thou need'st me. Dear, I know

That I must follow thee where thou wouldst go!

NEHEMIAH

I thank Thee, I can see but God's own ways.
For all Life gives me, may I offer praise!

IDOLATRY

(weeping)

Thou praiseth me? *(sadly)* Alas! Praise
me? Me?

NEHEMIAH

(firmly)

That which God gives me brings nor curse,
nor shame.

For all God sends me, may I praise His name.

IDOLATRY

(weeping bitterly, leaving)

Base, cruel world, that will not grant me all
The curses and abuse for which I call.

I crave for these! When kindness comes I go
Back to idolatry, and hell, and woe.

(weeping bitterly, exits)

NEHEMIAH

(with bowed head, as if in deep thought)

A teacher came to earth, and said that we,
Earth's toilers, have one God and thus are
free;

Thou shalt have no more gods than One,
saith he.

(Looking up as if wondering where)

IDOLATRY *had gone.*)

Idolatry is gone! I murmured much
At her attentions! Ah, I loathed her touch!
(IDOLATRY *hearing these last words, again
steps forward to enter. Enter the five
women, INTUITION, PATIENCE, GRATI-
TUDE, CHARITY and WAKEFULNESS. They
stand about NEHEMIAH.*)

(*Addressing the five women. IDOLATRY
quickly drops back from entrance.*)

Now I can see that kindness changed to wine,
Earth's water. God be praised! O let not
mine

Iniquities be called to mind! In deed
And word, let me be thankful that Love's
creed

Is never murmuring, nor vain abuse.
O, may I have one God, and rightly choose
Whom I shall serve. One God is All-in-all,
And God is Love! Father, on Thee I call
To save me from each hind'ring thought of
fear.

There shall be no more pain; no, nor one tear
Of woe, as we remember God's great love
Meets every need in earth and heav'n above.
(*The five women smile approvingly; they
exeunt.*)

(*A quiet woman enters and approaches NE-
HEMIAH. She is SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

With pious expression—to NEHEMIAH.)

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

I am one who comes to thee, my friend,
To tell thee I have never seen thee bend
To evil. All these Jews, a crooked set,
Have wrought, indeed, but now they would
forget

The need of further toil. Just thou, just
thou,

Art worthy! Dost thou not see?

(NEHEMIAH listens with pleased expression)

Now, ah, now,

Thou canst!

(clapping her hands for joy)

Come, then, Sanballat sends the word,
And Geshem, and Tobiah,—they have heard
How selflessly thou toil'st, and they would see
Thee well rewarded for thy industry.

*(NEHEMIAH leans his arm heavily upon
SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS' shoulder, and slowly
walks with her to exit. His feet drag
as if he were very weary. Not a word
is spoken.)*

NEHEMIAH

(low voice)

Yes, yes, 'tis true. I toil alone, 'tis true.
The world's great burdens fall upon a few!
*(Just as he is about to exit with SELF-
RIGHTEOUSNESS, NEHEMIAH slowly steps*

back and takes his arm from her shoulder. He looks her searchingly in the face.)

Thou hast not told thy name! Thy face is
scarred

With many marks, as if thou long hast
warred!

"I am doing (*slowly*) a great work (*slowly*)
so that

I cannot come down.

(turns toward wall)

Why should the work cease

*(he picks up his tools and begins to measure
the door openings)*

whilst I leave it
and come down to you?"

(SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS *turns dejectedly and
walks toward exit. NEHEMIAH begins
hammering loudly at gates.*)

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

(at exit)

*(addressed pleadingly to NEHEMIAH, who re-
gards her disapprovingly)*

We have been friends in days long passed
away.

Self-Righteousness, dost thou remember,
pray,

How kind a friend I have been unto thee?

(pleadingly)

Why dost thou, then, refuse to go with me?

(Exit SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. NEHEMIAH continues his work on the walls. HURRY comes in running. Dashes about stage, breathing excitedly. Rushes up to NEHEMIAH, and knocks over the gate which he slowly and carefully is fitting into place.)

NEHEMIAH

(looking curiously at HURRY as he is dashing madly about from one thing to another)

There is no need for hurry. Ah, I know Thy name. 'Tis hurry, worry, lack of time! There is, indeed, no reason, no, nor rhyme In thy existence. If thou wouldst not waste Thy days, remember, hurry hinders haste.

HURRY

(grabbing NEHEMIAH by the arm and pushing him around)

Ah, friend, the time is short. This wall should go

Up much more quickly! Thou art slow, so slow.

Clamp that gate into place!

(Seizes gate, it crashes from NEHEMIAH'S hand and drops down upon other clashing irons.)

Stand back, thou knave,
Canst thou not see the hours we might save?

Quick, bring that mortar! And that trowel
now!

(*Harsh commanding tone. NEHEMIAH does
not obey the orders.*)

Thou fool, thou knave, why falter? Quick!

But thou

Art slow!

(*HURRY rushes about smashing everything*)

NEHEMIAH

(*calmly*)

I do not thy dictations heed. God's ways
Are higher than thy ways. My loving praise
Goes to the Father who now leadeth me
Beside still waters of tranquillity.

Of all the messengers Sanballat had
Thou art the one that make the men least
glad,—

For thou art ignorance which never once
Hath wrought one thing except,—to act the
dunce.

Thou canst not curse my work, nor interfere
With my sure progress heavenward. The
way

Of true advancement is to wait and pray.
The one who hastens on shall know calm
poise,

While hurry retrogrades with deafening
noise.

The one who acts is always gentle, still;

While hurry, doing nothing, tries to fill
The world with the importance of its ways.
(*Raising his eyes to heaven as if in prayer
while HURRY rushes from the scene.*)

Father, thy active quietness, I praise!

(*A small man, PERSECUTION, carrying a whip
of many cords, enters. He appears proud
of himself. He glides craftily here and
there and everywhere. NEHEMIAH, not
observing PERSECUTION'S entrance, con-
tinues his work. PERSECUTION wickedly
looks at NEHEMIAH as he works and gives
him a fearful lash with the whip on his
back. The Cupbearer, startled, looks up
with pained expression. Enter SELF-PITY
and SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. They say
nothing, but stand solicitously at NE-
HEMIAH'S side. NEHEMIAH, taking a
few steps, observes PERSECUTION standing
prominently before him, and immediately
the Cupbearer's expression of suffering
changes to a look of vain relief.*)

NEHEMIAH

(to PERSECUTION)

Ah ha, I see thee now, thou gav'st the blow
That turned me from my work! I know thy
name,—

'Tis Persecution. Yea, I surely know

That thou hast caused me all this grief and shame!

(As NEHEMIAH weeps, PERSECUTION, stepping out into a more prominent position, appears to be most happy.)

PERSECUTION

(proudly, to NEHEMIAH)

Ah, yes, I struck the blow at thee, my friend,
My name is Persecution; many fear
The grief and ravages I daily send
To those whose mission is to conquer here.

(proudly)

I struck the blow!

(strutting about as if pleased
with himself)

NEHEMIAH

(turning sadly to his work
—to himself)

He struck the blow! Ah, me,
When shall I from the curse of self be free?
(These words are said discontentedly as if
dissatisfied with himself and the whole
world. PERSECUTION, turning quickly,
strikes the Cupbearer a stinging blow,
this time over the head.)

'Twas thou,

(turning defiantly toward SELF-PITY)

self-pity, who hath done this thing!

I shall not take thy curses! Suffering

(lashes NEHEMIAH cruelly over the head)

Is not my portion!

(again PERSECUTION steals up behind and lashes NEHEMIAH cruelly over the head)

PERSECUTION

(appearing boldly before NEHEMIAH)

No, No, 'twas I who lashed thee,—
My name is Persecution.

(pleadingly)

Call me so,

And credit me with all I do!

NEHEMIAH

(turns to his work. Again PERSECUTION strikes a stinging blow)

I know

This cruel blow came from self-righteous-
ness!

*(Turns defiantly toward SELF-
RIGHTEOUSNESS.)*

PERSECUTION

(as if offended)

Ah, no, it did not! I, to thee, profess,
I struck the blow!

NEHEMIAH

(to PERSECUTION)

I scorn, indeed, each word thou sayest,
knave!

And call thee not by name that thou wouldst
crave.

PERSECUTION

(eagerly)

'Twas Persecution struck the blow, I, I,
My name is Persecution, why, O, why
Not credit me with all I do? Why pray?

NEHEMIAH

(firmly)

I scorn, indeed, each word thou sayest; nay,
I need not thee believe! I shall not say
Thy name.

PERSECUTION

(angrily)

I go! I shall not stay,—not here!
Unless thou call'st me Persecution, Fear!
I like my name; no other one, alas,
Becometh me.

(*Brushing with disgust past NEHEMIAH, PERSECUTION takes SELF-PITY, and SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, each, by the arm, and leads them away.*)

Knave, traitor, let me pass!

(PERSECUTION, SELF-PITY and SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS walk defiantly together to entrance. *They exeunt.*)

(*Enter ENEMY. He has almost the exact appearance of NEHEMIAH, except his careless, insincere manner. He creeps stealthily about and wickedly tries to undermine all of NEHEMIAH'S work. Several loud*

reports indicate that powder explosions are going on.)

NEHEMIAH

Thou cursed fool! Thou Enemy of mine,
(trying to push ENEMY away)
Why dost thou come to ruin all my days—
Thou, hypocrite, thou traitor, coward, knave,
I loathe thy very face!

ENEMY

Hold, sir. Pray save
Thy curses!

NEHEMIAH

Curses?

(as if questioning himself)

Curses? What are they
To drive this Enemy of mine away?
(looking closely at ENEMY)

Where have I seen that face, that cruel
smile?
(seizing ENEMY and shaking him vigorously)
I know thee now.

(rubbing his eyes)

Blinded was I a while
To whom thou wert. Thou hast my very face
With fear's contortions.

(ENEMY makes ugly grimaces)

(NEHEMIAH'S hands raised as if in prayer)

Give me strength and grace,
Father, ever to know my enemy

Is but the fear of self mine own eyes see.
Ah, enemy,

(to ENEMY)

I truly know that thou
Hath counterfeited me. Go! Now, now,
Now!

(exit ENEMY)

*(Enter a shrunk, fearful man; he appears
to be annoyed over everything. He is
LOVE OF MONEY.)*

LOVE OF MONEY

(to NEHEMIAH)

Here, listen to me! I have much to say
For thine own good. I have a wondrous plan
For earning money quickly, and a man
Like thee would do so well, so well for me!
Come with me, I can truly make thee free.

(eagerly)

I have an income I will give to thee,
Gold in abundance, so thou need'st not be
Fettered by weary toil. Activity
And thou shalt part. Until ye die, indeed,
Thou shalt have money for each daily need.
*(The little man walks nervously about as he
speaks. He is constantly taking papers
and gold from his pockets that he may
figure up the total of his wealth. He ap-
pears disturbed over the process, ill-at-
ease with himself and the world.)*

There is so much to gain,—notes, bonds,
yea, all

Of lands and houses, mortgages!

(eagerly)

I call

On thee to help me with this mighty work.

(LOVE OF MONEY *takes* NEHEMIAH *commandingly by the arm as if he would lead him away. NEHEMIAH draws back.*)

What, wouldst thou fail me, wouldst thou
even shirk

The duty each wouldst grasp to earn—to
earn—?

(LOVE OF MONEY *takes quantities of gold from apparently inexhaustible pockets and heaps the treasure, alluringly, about NEHEMIAH'S feet. NEHEMIAH makes as if he would turn away from the gold, but is almost unable to do so.*)

Dost thou shrink back, dost thou not yearn,
not yearn

For this?

(*pointing to heaps of gold*)

NEHEMIAH

(*hesitatingly, addressing himself*)

This mortar, and these joists, I know

Must yet be paid for!

(*As if half reaching out for the money.*

Darkness falls as NEHEMIAH is struggling

over the heap of gold.)

To pay (*hesitatingly*) as I go,
Is all I ask!

(as if justifying himself)

God knows, God knows, this gold
Hath no attraction for me, but I hold
It precious—just—to—meet

(as if trying to convince himself)

my daily need.

(DAILY HUMAN NEEDS, *come flocking in,*
Darkness creeps on. NEHEMIAH *hesitat-*
ingly reaches out his hands to the gold.
While the darkness deepens, he may be
seen walking in the shadows away from
the gold, and, as he walks, he prays.
LOVE OF MONEY *snatches up the coin and*
carries it to a position near the entrance.
At this moment, the scene again becomes
as bright as morning.)

One comes in future years whose every deed
Shall prove the Father's infinite supply

(LOVE OF MONEY *beckons alluringly*
to NEHEMIAH)

Doth meet each hourly need; then, why
should I

E'er falter in this work when God, alone,
Doth pay for every joist and beam and stone?
(NEHEMIAH *stands as if in prayer. A flock*
of creditors, representing, collectively,

Daily Human Needs, come hastening in presenting their bills for payment. Beholding LOVE OF MONEY with his heaps of gold standing at entrance, the creditors believe him to be NEHEMIAH'S steward; and, quickly depositing their bills, they snatch up LOVE OF MONEY'S money and depart, each one saying as he leaves: "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money—usury of anything that is lent upon usury."

(Deut. 23:19.)

LOVE OF MONEY

(beholding that his riches have suddenly disappeared, despairingly to NEHEMIAH)

'Twas mine, 'twas mine, 'twas mine, and now 'tis lost—

Think of the endless toil it cost, it cost!

(Weeps bitterly while looking where his heaps of gold had been.)

NEHEMIAH

(compassionately)

Poor love of money, thou art richer now
Than thou hast ever been.

(LOVE OF MONEY shakes his head.)

Yea, now; yea, thou!

Thou, hast, indeed, no money now to love,
Yet God hath riches that ye dream not of.

(Going with tender compassion to LOVE OF

MONEY *and embracing him.*)

Dear outcast, let me even call thee, friend
Let this be thy new name, and let me lend
Thee all I have,—a thought, a word of cheer.
Friend, may Love bless thee on thy journeys
here.

Robbed of the useless dross thou hadst, I see
(*peering closely into his eyes*)

Thine eyes are bright with immortality.
Such are thy riches, gold,—the light of youth,
(LOVE OF MONEY *straightens up; appears*
youthful and happy.)

Love in abundance, yea, the gain of Truth.
Ah, friend, the harvests mortals daily glean
From their earth's losses! None hath surely
seen

More wondrous wealth than this! My
friend, my friend,
Thou hast lost all, and, yet, hath all to lend!
(NEHEMIAH *and his Friend shake hands.*
Exit the Friend, formerly LOVE OF
MONEY. NEHEMIAH *steps forward—with*
hands outstretched.)

Ah, World, when Love of Money comes, the
light

Of heav'n fades, and falls the darkest night
Of self. When Love of Money goes, the way
Grows ever brighter till effulgent day

Of Truth hath dawned. Then, never human
need

Shall reach us, since the Father hath, indeed,
Met every one abundantly! Ah, World,
For centuries thou shalt be cast, yea, hurled
Within the maelstrom of earth's search for
dross.

From self thou shalt be cleansed, till human
loss

Nor gain shall mar thy journeyings. Ah,
World,

(as if in prophecy)

Thou shalt have all! God's ensign, then, un-
furled

Shall make of thee one nation, strong and
free,

Provisioned with Truth's immortality.

CANTICLE VIII.

DESCRIPTION: *Same as Canticle VII. Morning scene. Over-bright sun typifying unrest. Enter twelve very small children. They quarrel incessantly among themselves. They constantly get in NEHEMI-AH'S way and howl angrily over the least provocation. Collectively they represent HUMAN BIRTH.*

DISCOVERED: *Twelve noisy children trooping in.*

HUMAN BIRTH (First Small Child)

(stubbing toe on building material and howling bitterly)

Oh, my, oh, my, oh, my, my toe!

(sitting down and holding toe in hands)
my toe!

(All of the children crowd noisily about the injured one. Some of them laugh mischievously. Some of them push and crowd and knock each other over. Some whine. Some cry for fear. Some laugh loudly. The uproar is terrific as one child

pushes another and shrieks: "Leave me alone!" and another shouts: "Coward!" Suddenly someone throws bright colored baubles in the midst of the children. Together they roar hoarsely: "Good, good, good, good!" The baubles quickly vanish as the children reach out for them. Children all howl as baubles vanish.)

NEHEMIAH

(tenderly, to children)

Where have I seen before such human woe?
Where have I seen such poor untempered zest
O'er life's vain baubles which but live at best
One moment?

(as if remembering)

Ah, I recall, in days long gone,
I, too, believed myself a child who grew
As others bade me.

HUMAN BIRTH (Second Small Child)

(accusing all the children)

He knew, he, he knew!

HUMAN BIRTH (Third Small Child)

(snatching something from another child)

He took that!

HUMAN BIRTH (Fourth Small Child)

It's mine!

HUMAN BIRTH (Fifth Small Child)

I tell ye, it's mine! *(sobbing)*

HUMAN BIRTH (Sixth Small Child)

It's mine.

HUMAN BIRTH (Seventh Small Child)

I had it first!

HUMAN BIRTH (Eighth Small Child)

I did!

HUMAN BIRTH (Ninth Small Child)

He took it!

HUMAN BIRTH (Tenth Small Child)

It's mine.

HUMAN BIRTH (Eleventh Small Child)

She stole it!

HUMAN BIRTH (Twelfth Small Child)

He did! Shame! Coward!

HUMAN BIRTH (First Small Child)

(trying to protect a child)

Leave him alone, he's my brother.

*(Indicating child and pushing tormentor
aside scornfully.)*

You! You!

NEHEMIAH

The words of God may now be understood.

(beholding the quarreling of children)

I credit not mine eyes. This is not true.

*(Raising hand as if stilling a tempest. The
children immediately become quiet and
listen.)*

Love knows no human birth, self's devious
ways

Of fretfulness, and fear, and shouts of praise!
Naught can deny that God is Father of
All men and that He doth create through
love!

(Compassionately to the children.)

Dear children, how I love thee, waifs of
earth,

God will reveal to thee thine own new birth!
(as if in prophecy)

To-day, the tribes of Israel shall come,
Yea, twelve of them, to lead thee safely home,
Beside still waters, where man hath not age
Nor youth!

*(The children, as if in prayer, clasp their
hands and look up to heaven.)*

Come, tribes of Israel, come here!

*(Enter twelve Israelites, six men and six
women. There is a hushed silence while
each one takes a child gently by the
hand.)*

ALL THE CHILDREN

(together)

How glad we are! There is naught now to
fear!

(Each of the twelve children, led by a representative of the twelve tribes of Israel, passes by NEHEMIAH. The Cupbearer tenderly places his hand on each child as if giving a blessing.)

NEHEMIAH

Thou shalt be safely led o'er moor and fen,
And shouldst thou stumble thou shalt rise
again.

(lovingly to children)

These Tribes of Israel shall guard and tell
Thee how to go. Dear children, all is well!
Truth's peace be ever with thee on thy way
To Life, eternal, and effulgent day,
Where man is neither old nor young—where
he

Dwells as God's image through eternity.

*(The children and Twelve Tribes of Israel
quietly pass from the stage.)*

*(Brightness of noon-day. Ex-
cessive heat, denoting weariness.)*

*(Enter MATURITY, a man who appears to
be fast growing old.)*

MATURITY

(fearfully to NEHEMIAH)

I fear for thee! Thou art not well, alas!
Why shouldst thou work, my friend, thy
youth will pass
From thee!

(peering into NEHEMIAH'S face)

Or, hath it gone, indeed,—
The while thou toilest over work's dead
creed?

I am afraid for thee, thou troubl'st me!
This heat is very great! Alas, my friend,
I fear for thee—I do so long to send
Thee to thy rest in bed of ease, to-day,
Where thou couldst sleep earth's stupid
hours away.

NEHEMIAH

(*scornfully*)

I know this argument, maturity—
This cursed falsity, this cruel fear—
This baseless nothing cannot enter here.
Man is forever young, forever old,
Forever childlike—God's law hath foretold!

(*Pushes MATURITY beyond exit.*)

(*Enter a dark, sinister-looking man with
long, flowing robes. He carries a large
black sack over his shoulder. His robes
fly about as if blown by the wind. He
is DISCOURAGEMENT.*)

(*Night falls. Extremely cold
and desolate.*)

DISCOURAGEMENT

(*to NEHEMIAH*)

What, alone! Where are the lazy Jews to-
day?

Thou workest here so long, and wherefore,
pray?

Thou hast, indeed, no portion when 'tis done.

(NEHEMIAH *drops his hammer, rubs his forehead and listens.*)

I often wonder why thou shouldst do
This useless work and slay thyself! 'Tis true
No Jew will thank thee. Come, and rest, my
friend.

A chariot awaits without. Just lend
Thy time to us a while, and thou shalt be
Repaid, indeed, for thy sincerity.
Here no one knows.

(NEHEMIAH *sadly assents.*)

Yea, no one cares!

(NEHEMIAH *agrees*)

I see

Thou art well-nigh discouraged.

(NEHEMIAH *leans dejectedly against the wall.*)

Come with me!

(NEHEMIAH *takes a few steps toward DIS-
COURAGEMENT and draws back.*)

I journey incognito and 'tis well—

I am of noble birth. Come, I will tell

Thee of thy portion, sleep; thy sacred right
To take the easy way of work. Dark night
Enfolds thee in oblivion, my friend.

(*Long arms, with flowing sleeves, held high
over NEHEMIAH'S head.*)

Trust all to me, trust all, and I will send
Thy soul to hell (*eagerly*) and there my par-

ent, Death,
Will rob thee of thine all,—thy very breath!
(Takes from the sack thrown over his shoulder a handful of seeds, and scatters them about. As seeds fall, loud, harsh noises are heard.)

This is my grain,—seeds of dismay. Why stand

Beside that wall in danger?

(Fearful noises as seeds fall. NEHEMIAH, frightened, drops tools from his hands.)

From thine hand

(indicating tools)

They fall! Come, let us in God's house now meet,

Within the temple. Fear would slay thee!

(Loud reports of hail and sleet. Flashes of lightning. Stage becomes like blackest night. Evil imps, small of stature, whisk about everywhere. They tug at NEHEMIAH'S garments, bearing him almost to the ground, hang about his neck, whisper in his ear and mock him.)

Sleet,

Hail, and lightning,—in the night they come.

(DISCOURAGEMENT steps forward and takes NEHEMIAH'S hand as if to lead him from danger.)

Come with me, friend, and I will lead thee
home—

Straight to our safe abiding place in hell.
Come with me, and my parent, Death, will
tell

Thee of thy greatness!

(NEHEMIAH goes with him a few steps. The
hail, thunder, and lightning cease and
imps drop down behind heaps of building
material. A false, convenient peace
seems to settle down.)

NEHEMIAH

(with a start, as if awakening)

To—tell—of me—me?

DISCOURAGEMENT

(quickly as if correcting his words)

To let thee tell of all the work that thou
Hast wrought upon these walls. Come with
me, now!

NEHEMIAH

(drawing back)

To speak of one's own self is at a loss!
God bears true witness here! Why should I
cross

The barriers of hell to talk with thee
And Death about myself? I must be free!

DISCOURAGEMENT

(still pleading)

How still it is,—so quiet now! Ah, see,

Thou may'st have peace if thou wilt come with me.

(NEHEMIAH *draws himself up to his full height, 'and towers above DISCOURAGEMENT who appears to shrivel away almost to nothing.*)

NEHEMIAH

(to DISCOURAGEMENT)

I ask, should such a man as I then flee?

(*Steps with firm strides to wall and, seizing huge gates, clamps them into place. DISCOURAGEMENT partially rises again and begins once more to scatter seeds but the sounds are very faint and soon die away. In low, weak voice DISCOURAGEMENT tries to argue with NEHEMIAH, who continues his work.*)

DISCOURAGEMENT

(to NEHEMIAH)

Come—Come—(*very faint,—hail—thunder—lightning—*)

(*very low voice*) Come—come home—

Home—(*very low*)—home—home—hell—home—

Home—home—hell—home—home.

(NEHEMIAH *rises to full height beside the nearly finished wall. One of the few last gates is clamped into place. He pays no heed to the whisperings of DISCOURAGE-*

ment but joyously continues his task.)

NEHEMIAH

(to himself—proudly)

'Tis nearly finished! *(sigh of relief)* Ah! I
have done well,

To stand against my enemies and foes.

How well I wrought, the future ages tell,

How well I stood, the God in heaven knows!

*(As NEHEMIAH speaks of himself, one of the
smallest and most persistent of imps
perches on a pile of building material,
and just as NEHEMIAH finishes these
words, the imp tries to press a dark, green
vial between his lips.)*

IMP

(pressing vial to NEHEMIAH'S lips)

Taste, taste it, friend, 'tis very, very sweet.

NEHEMIAH

(struggling to get away)

Why should I taste it?

*(as he speaks, the IMP quickly pours some of
its contents down his throat?)*

IMP

(to NEHEMIAH)

Because 'tis truly meet

That thou shouldst know all woe.

NEHEMIAH

This *(striking vial from his mouth)* taste
(tasting), it is —

Like cursed poison!

(As he begins to moan, DEATH enters dressed in black flowing robe; he is very old and bent.)

DEATH

(to NEHEMIAH)

Did some one call? Is this
The place where I am wanted?

NEHEMIAH

(to DEATH)

No one called.

No, not wanted! *(angrily)*

DEATH

(to NEHEMIAH)

I heard a moan, my name,
Another name for Death; in fact, some know
No other name for Death but uttered woe!

(DEATH steals across the stage and takes both of NEHEMIAH'S hands. The IMPS smile wickedly at NEHEMIAH while DISCOURAGEMENT scatters seeds of discord. Loud noises, hail, thunder. Flashes of lightning. It is still very dark.)

Thy hands are cold, my friend, just let me
hold

Them close! They are so very, very cold.

(NEHEMIAH shudders as if overcome with cold. Enter SIGHT, HEARING, TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL, and quietly take their

places at his side. They appear powerless to act.)

NEHEMIAH

(to the five men, as he sinks down upon a pile of building material)

I see, and smell, and taste, and touch, and hear,

And, yet, I almost yield to cursed fear.

(calling loudly)

Come Intuition, Patience, Gratitude,

(as if in a death struggle)

Charity, Wakefulness hath understood!

(Looking appealingly toward five men.

All senses change forms at once to those of women.)

GRATITUDE

(Kneeling down and speaking clearly into NEHEMIAH'S right ear, while DEATH continues to whine in his left ear. NEHEMIAH'S face undergoes a mighty change and struggle. The right side of his face, while GRATITUDE is speaking, seems to be freed from pain. The left side twitches nervously as if in great pain. While GRATITUDE speaks, the scene is bright and warm.)

Thou asked for just one day of gratitude,

For vict'ry over cares, diseases, fears.

I heard thee praising God, friend, as I stood

Beside thee in thy work! A thousand years
Of blessings daily come to one who prays
Rejoicingly, and thanks God for His ways.
Thou needst not fear this monster, death,
for he

Is stupid sleep, weak inactivity.

(GRATITUDE rises and steps aside)

DEATH

(*whispering whiningly in NEHEMIAH'S left
ear; scene changes to dark, cold night*)

How dark the night! I am unloved and old!
My happiness is past! How very cold
This place is! In the yesterdays, I had
So many joys to make me very glad.
I loved the past! This present hour, I *hate*!
I want to die! Why stay here? Wherefore
wait

For joy within the world, when joy is gone?
While others have glad days, I mourn alone!

INTUITION

(*kneeling, speaks clearly into NEHEMIAH'S
right ear. Bright light*)

Death is the myth of myths. Human despair
And fretfulness its creed. Beset with care,
Death's other self is age, old age, that lends
Nor gives joys of to-day. Death's yesterday
now sends
It to its doom.

NEHEMIAH

(*With doubt, to INTUITION; looking fearfully toward DEATH.*)

Thou speak'st as if, indeed,
Death were not someone! Why say'st: "Its
creed

Is fretfulness?"

Is Death not someone, then?

INTUITION

(*Bright scene.*)

Death is a counterfeit. Time and again
It comes to speak to us, as person, when
It is not person, place, nor anything!

(*DEATH continues to whine incoherently into
NEHEMIAH'S left ear. NEHEMIAH winces
as if in pain. INTUITION rises and steps
aside. The scene again becomes dark.*)

NEHEMIAH

Alas! Alas! This cruel suffering!

DEATH

(*exultingly*)

Ah me, ah me, in Babylon, my friend,
Thou didst have joy as Cupbearer. Why lend
Thy self to those who have no thought for
thee?

None loves nor pities thee! None cares to
see

Thee now! I know, for I am old, so old!
My name is Death, Old Age. Ah, I have told

Thee mournful facts!

NEHEMIAH

(as if weakening)

I know! Yea, I grow old!

My happiness is past! Friends turn away!

It was not thus, alas, in former day!

Ah, these are mournful facts which Death
hath told.

PATIENCE

(speaking clearly in NEHEMIAH'S right ear.

Light.)

Thou shalt prove faithful, friend, patient,
and kind,

Thou shalt be grateful still to work and give!

—This is the good no man can e'er unbind,—

Thou shalt be patient that all men may live.

Thou needst not fear this monster, death.

Rise, see,

'Tis stupid sleep, weak inactivity.

DEATH

(to NEHEMIAH

Night scene.)

The ones who built with thee, thy very own,

Hath turned away from thee; and now, alone,

Thou faceth the end of all! Is there worse

Than just to have as heritage Death's curse?

Why have they turned from thee, those shift-
less men,

To let thee die alone, unloved? Ah, when

Shall we poor mortals wake to sadly see
We have no portion save disloyalty?

NEHEMIAH

Must we poor mortals wake to sadly see
We have no portion save disloyalty?
Why do I mutter words Death speaks to me?
May I not voice the Truth that sets men free?
Why doth it seem all friends have turned
away?
Is God not God in heav'n, eternally?
This work of mine, could it have been for
naught,—
Why do I speak of self, what I have wrought?

CHARITY

*(comes quietly forward and kneels close
to NEHEMIAH*

Bright scene.)

To speak forever, friend, of God's great good
Is loving charity; Well understood
Is man's true character when God is claimed
As his Creator,—none is cursed nor blamed.
This work upon this wall is not of men,—
None shall subtract nor add to it again.
Thou needst not fear thy work shall pass
away
—And this is Life—o'er work death hath no
sway

(DEATH binds NEHEMIAH with heavy, cold

chains. NEHEMIAH groans and breathes heavily.)

(shuddering)

NEHEMIAH

How cold, alas, how very, very cold
These chains are!

WAKEFULNESS

(Light.)

Yet they cannot ever hold
Thee from thy work. Thou shalt arise and
go,

As victor over sin and fear and woe.

Death hath no power to bind the one who,
freed

From self, goes forth to meet another's need.
(NEHEMIAH continues to breathe heavily. He appears to be in a death struggle. DEATH exults over every groan.)

NEHEMIAH

(gaspingly)

Self! Self! Self!

Self!—From self may I then go?

Pain! Self! Fear!

Death! Want! Woe!

DEATH

(exultingly as NEHEMIAH'S breath becomes fainter)

Ah, this is death! I saw it long ago,—

This closing off of breath! I know! I know!

Thou saw'st my mother breathe her last and
go;

Thy father, too, ye saw it long ago.

Ah, this is death!

It is the separation which I fear.

Thou shalt be far away from here, from here.

Thy hands are cold!

(*Holds NEHEMIAH'S hands.*)

Yea, very cold, alas.

I fear for thee. Thou know'st that I shall pass
Death's boundaries.

NEHEMIAH

(*Rising with a struggle, gaspingly.*)

Why dost thou speak of thee

And me as ever one?

DEATH

Ah, wouldst thou see

Death's mysteries?

(*As if explainng a puzzle.*)

I would confound, confuse

Thy name with mine, so that if thou wouldst
choose

Thine own, thou shalt, indeed, draw forth
my name,

Fast intertwined with thine. This is Death's
game

Of self,—a wicked prattle 'tis, indeed,

To speak thy name and mine together so.

Yea, Babylon confounded is my creed.

Thine heritage and mine are self and woe.

NEHEMIAH

(*shuddering*)

A tiny speck before my eye appears.

It blots out all the world! Death, all thy fears
Are come to pass!

(*Small black speck dances before DEATH'S and NEHEMIAH'S eyes. A dark and dreadful cloud, zigzag flashes of lightning. A dense, dark mist, spreading itself like a heavy cloud settles over all. Shrieks of women, screams of children, the shouts of men, some screaming, "O, let me die!"; some begging, "O, let me die!"; children crying, "O, why must I die!" Many hands lifted through the clouds of human warfare as if reaching out vainly for help. NEHEMIAH, with a mighty struggle, raises himself on his elbow, and beholds the death struggle of a world. The expression of his face changes quickly from intense fear to tender compassion. He reaches out both hands as if he would grasp the hands of those extended through the dark clouds and mist. NEHEMIAH, with wondrous strength, rises to his feet and lifts his eyes to heaven.*)

Self is the speck that now
Doth dance before my sight!

I ask, canst thou

(As if speaking to ALL.)

Not see this speck wouldst shut out all the
light

Of good? Father, I lift mine eyes to thee!

(speck disappears)

The speck of self is vanished! I am free!
I stand a freed man now! I, strong and well,
Health, joy and peace, for *all* mankind fore-
tell!

Is all mankind involved in Death's dire woe;
Must they through endless night of fear then
go?

The world, itself, is perishing, and I
Am crushed and buried in the heap! Ah,
why

Should they

(with compassion)

not rise this moment, now, and be
Transformed from death to immortality?

(in earnest prayer)

God save mankind, this hour! Father, their
need

Is more than mine! I pray, may *they* be
freed!

(as if in prophecy)

The shepherds, keeping watch, shall see the
light

Of one brave star of Love. Yea, though dark
night

Of fear may settle o'er the world, they see
The star of Truth's new birth that makes
men free!

*(A bright star shines clearly down through
the night of darkness and dispels the
gloom. The hands reaching out for help
vanish in the light.)*

The star that images God's wondrous might
Of health, and holiness, and endless right.

DEATH

(as if disheartened)

Thou prayest for the world? Alas, in vain
I wait for thee!

NEHEMIAH

(to DEATH)

Thy loss becomes earth's gain!
Death's dream is false! *(triumphantly)* An-
other comes to say:

"Where is thy sting?" and where, grave, is
thy way

Of victory?

*(DEATH sinks to the floor and falls into a
dead sleep. NEHEMIAH laughs joyously.)*

Death takes the form of sleep.

This is the one disguise that death wouldst
keep.

(NEHEMIAH calls messengers;
two men enter.)

Come, Messengers, and carry out this form
Of death. Disguised as sleep, death seeks to
harm

All men. Self, self alone! Death's very
curse

Is finite fear of self—could there be worse?
Death is nor person, place, nor anything—
Its one disguise is self and suffering.

*(The messengers carry DEATH from the
stage. NEHEMIAH turns back to his work
on the wall. DISCOURAGEMENT creeps up
behind him.)*

'Tis finished, as our enemies shall see.

My God, think thou upon them, those who
cursed

Our labor! Not for once, not once, I durst
Not think of them!

DISCOURAGEMENT

*(trying to peer into NEHEMIAH'S
face; whispering)*

Come, we will talk of thee. Come, hell, come,
home!

Come, let us ponder thy life's martyrdom!

NEHEMIAH

*(DISCOURAGEMENT looks about and beckons
as if to unseen allies. All of the evil mes-
sengers previously appearing in this*

scene hasten in, bearing flaming vials of boiling oil and pitch. NEHEMIAH is fairly flooded with this scorching hot fluid which is poured in floods over the walls. For a time NEHEMIAH appears besmirched with a hideous coat of pitch.)

DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE

We are Desire-to-be-Alone, sin's throng
Of evil messengers—we are pride's strong
Desire to think of self for good or ill;
Desire to be alone is our one will!

NEHEMIAH

To think of one's own self is at a loss.
God's secret place is here! I bear no cross.
I know thee, troops of persons, places,
things,—

Thou art desire-to-be-alone which brings
These barriers of hell to me and thee.
Though multitudes are with me, I am free!
Desire to share, desire to do and give,
Desire to lend myself that men may live;
This, then, is joyous rest,—home, heaven, all.
Desire to be with men, to heed the call
Of all mankind,—yea, each desire to be
With others brings life, immortality.

(As these last words are spoken, the coat of pitch which previously enveloped NEHEMIAH rolls off, leaving him with

cleansed, glorified countenance. Evil messengers depart.)

(*NEHEMIAH works on undaunted, clamping the last gate into place, and hammering joyously while all of his helpers, including the daughters of SHALLUM, come thronging in. NEHEMIAH, turning suddenly, beholds DISCOURAGEMENT, who still hides behind him.*)

ALL

We come to bring thee courage, friend. We know

Thou hast withstood the battery of foe.

(*NEHEMIAH looks DISCOURAGEMENT unflinchingly in the eye—to DISCOURAGEMENT*)

Ha! After death hath fall'n, for very shame,
Ye follow me,—discouragement,—

(derisively)

no name!

(*DISCOURAGEMENT trembles for fear as he sees the company which comes to encourage NEHEMIAH. When he hears his name called, he covers back toward the exit.*)

DISCOURAGEMENT

(shrinking away)

The lie hath turned upon me, now I go
Back to discouragement, and hell, and woe!

(Exit DISCOURAGEMENT, in shriveled, shrinking form. All laugh joyously as he fades away.)

NEHEMIAH

(to ALL)

This work is wrought of God. Yea, He, alone,
Hath surely built this wall, stone upon stone.
(The five women stand closely about him;
a star shines brightly over all.)

CANTICLE IX

SABBATH REST, FOLLOWED BY EVIL'S ACCUSATIONS

DESCRIPTION: *Showing completed walls. The bright light of a Sabbath morning shines over all.*

DISCOVERED: *A vast company of men, women, and children, singing praises for the completion of the walls.*

ALL

(singing together)

“O give thanks unto the Lord: for He is good;
for His mercy endureth forever.

O give thanks unto the God of gods; for His
mercy endureth forever.

O give thanks to the Lord of lords; for His
mercy endureth forever.

To Him who alone doeth great wonders; for
His mercy endureth forever.”

(Ps. 136:1-4.)

*(Enter NEHEMIAH with HANANI
and HANANIAH)*

NEHEMIAH

(to HANANI and HANANIAH)

I give thee charge over Jerusalem,—

The while I depart to my lord, the King.

Let thy singers sing a glad anthem;
Everyone faithful let him praise and sing:
Glory to God on High!

HANANI
(to NEHEMIAH)

I take thy charge.

NEHEMIAH
(to HANANIAH)

"Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened
until the sun be hot;
And while they stand by,
Let them shut the doors, and bar them:
And appoint watches of the inhabitants of
Jerusalem;
Every one in his watch,
And every one to be over against his house."
Thou art a captain, commanded to keep
Watch over Israel; faint not nor sleep.

ALL
(*intoning*)

(*addressed to EZRA, the Scribe*)

Bring the Book of the Law of Moses
Which the Lord hath commanded to Israel.
Bring the Book. Let its pages tell
The words of the Law, which the Lord, our
God
Hath commanded to Israel.

(*EZRA, the priest, brings the Book of the Law
before the men and women; and reads*

therein before the water gate. He stands upon a pulpit of wood. Beside him stand several men.)

EZRA

(reading from parchment Bible)

“Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone;
Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of
 heavens,
With all their host, the earth, and all the
 things that are therein,
The seas, and all that is therein,
And Thou preserveth them all;
And the host of heaven worshippeth Thee.
Thou are the Lord the God, who didst choose
 Abram,
And broughtest him forth out of Ur of the
 Chaldees,
And gavest him the name of Abraham;
And didst see the affliction of our fathers
 in Egypt,
And heardest their cry by the Red sea;
And shewedst signs and wonders upon
 Pharaoh,
And on all his servants, and on all the people
 of his land; for Thou knewest
That they dealt proudly against them.
And Thou did'st divide the sea before them,
 so
That they went through the midst of the sea

on the dry land."

(The people weep as the Law is read.)

NEHEMIAH

(to ALL)

This day is holy unto the Lord your God;

Mourn not, nor weep.

Mourn not, nor weep.

Go thy way *(to the people who still weep)*

—eat the fat, and drink the sweet,

And send portions unto them for whom
nothing is prepared;

For this day is holy unto our God;

Neither be ye sorry;

For the joy of the Lord is thy strength.

THE LEVITES

(on either side of EZRA)

"Hold thy peace for the day is holy;

Neither be ye grieved."

*(The people who have prostrated themselves
rise with olive branches, and pine
branches, and myrtle branches, and palms,
and branches of thick trees, and sing to-
gether.)*

ALL

(singing together)

This day is a day of gladness,

For we have comprehended

The words of the law which were read to us,

O Lord thy name we bless.

(exeunt singers)

NEHEMIAH

(to HANANI)

I appoint thee keeper of this wall,
And all Jerusalem. Pray,
Let not vain pride, nor power nor human
sway

Cause one stone e'er to fall.

*(to ELIASHIB, a relative of TOBIAH,
pointing to temple)*

Watch o'er yon temple wisely. Israel-
Shall be redeemed. God keep thee! All is
well!

To-day I return to my lord, the King
Of Babylon. Indeed, I go to bring
Him homage, gratitude, and loyalty.

ALL

May peace and joy and health, be e'er with
thee!

*(As the last words are spoken in farewell,
enter two messengers from ARTAXERXES,
the King. All exeunt save NEHEMIAH.)*

FIRST MESSENGER

(hastily to NEHEMIAH)

A letter to thee, Sir, thy lord, the King,
Commissioned me to come, quickly to bring
This message.

NEHEMIAH

(Taking letter, reads it as if not understand-

ing its contents. He continues to read, as if puzzled.)

I was going there—to-day—
To Persia—I seek to be a king? (*reading*)

May

I be punished if 'tis true,—I seek,—I
(*reading*) To be a king? (*puzzled*) Of what
and wherefore? Why

Should I be king when there is One, alone,—
The God in heaven? (*reading*) “And thou
must well atone

For all thy vanity. I trusted thee
And now thou, traitor-like (*reading*),
would'st pillage me

Of mine own kingdom. Thou must surely be
An ingrate, so Sanballat says, and he
Hath proof whereof he speaks. I know no
way

Save punishment to curb thy wicked sway.”

SECOND MESSENGER

(*while FIRST MESSENGER steps to NEHEMIAH'S side and both bind him with chains*)

We take thee prisoner.

NEHEMIAH

(*to MESSENGERS*)

I was to come
Of myself as King's Cupbearer. (*pondering*)

My home
Is not an earthly kingdom. God is good,

And He, indeed, hath surely understood.
This work upon the walls, canst thou not
see

(pointing with chained hand to wall)

Was truly mine own kingdom! Just to free
Another from the curse of poverty
And sin and fear, my friends, is all I ask
Of earthly kingdom,—just my daily task.
*(Exit NEHEMIAH bound with chains between
the two messengers.)*

CANTICLE X

DESCRIPTION: A vast underground rock
quarry. Blinding smoke
from the blasting. Deso-
late, weird surroundings.

DISCOVERED: Several slaves and overseer
silently at work crushing
stones. They each groan
under the desperate burden
of the work. SANBALLAT
and GESHEM stand at one
side and watch the workers
with sinister glee.

TIME: Several years later.

*(Enter NEHEMIAH. He is carrying heavy
blasting materials. He lays down his bur-
den and begins hewing out the largest of
the rocks. As he works, just above him*

appears a wondrous picture of the Pyramids. NEHEMIAH glances up from his work but, at the same time, renews his blows on the rock, which yields easily. He beholds the picture just above him and smiles approvingly as he notes the unfolding of the world's history in the appearing of these massive Egyptian structures. Again NEHEMIAH glimpses the completed Temple and walls of Jerusalem. A wondrous city lies beyond. His work upon the stones is easily accomplished. Finally, a vision of the Statue of Liberty appears at the entrance to earth's Promised Land. For a brief moment, NEHEMIAH extends both hands as if in joyous greeting to the womanly traits of love and tenderness, typified in this statue which must eventually spiritualize the universe; and as he reaches out his hands, the very stones about him fall of themselves to pieces as if made ready for use without human effort. All about NEHEMIAH, the other slaves who behold no vision, are moaning bitterly over their tasks. SANBALLAT, GESHEM, and TOBIAH discern NEHEMIAH'S joy and work. Together they plan to further punish NEHEMIAH. During this scene, no word is spoken.)

CANTICLE XI

“THERE IS NOTHING COVERED, THAT SHALL
NOT BE REVEALED”

DESCRIPTION: *Same as Canticle I. The Persian Court.*

DISCOVERED: KING ARTAXERXES and QUEEN
*on throne. Royal festivities.
A strange Cupbearer is
serving wine.*

TIME: *Nine years later than Canticle
VIII.*

THE KING
(to MESSENGER)

And so Sanballat comes to us to-day?

MESSENGER
(to KING)

Blest King, Sanballat comes, and Geshem,
too.

THE KING
(*observing the new Cupbearer as he goes
about his task serving wine—to MESSEN-
GER*)

Tell me, how is my Cupbearer of time long
past?

MESSENGER

(to KING)

Nehemiah?

KING AND QUEEN

(eagerly, together)

Nehemiah.

MESSENGER

'Tis true to watch and pray
And work, is all he ever seeks to do.

THE KING

Some one has said his peace and joy e'er last.

MESSENGER

'Tis very true; the hardest, roughest task
Is not too much, indeed, for him to ask
To do.

THE KING

Where is he working now, my son?

MESSENGER

(to KING)

He toils within thy quarries, till the sun
Sinks low. Thou dost, blest King of Persia,
know

That he was doomed with convict-slaves to
give

His days to crushing stones, that he might
live,

Or merely might exist through days of woe,—
This was his punishment, my Lord and King.
Because Sanballat said he sought to bring

Himself to higher power,—to rule, perchance,
Within Jerusalem.

THE KING
(pondering)

He has had chance
To murmur (*thinking deeply*) Yea, I know
that he was sent
To toil on yonder pile of stones, till bent
And old he should become.

(*As if arousing to new interest.*)

Does he complain?

MESSENGER
Not at his work! He holds as richest gain
A task that takes all courage. There are
days
When those who watch him toil say that he
prays
Unceasingly.

THE KING
What is his prayer?

MESSENGER
That fortified Jerusalem may stand.

THE KING
Would he return?

MESSENGER
Of this he does not pray. He oftentimes says
With deepest love, that God in His own ways
Must keep Jerusalem—shall guard it well—
That God is King, alone.

THE KING

And does he tell

Of his own wondrous work upon the wall?

MESSENGER

Not once. He always prays no stone may
fall.

(Enter SANBALLAT and GESHEM with several attendants. They all kneel before the KING and QUEEN. The KING gives them all permission to arise.)

THE KING

(to SANBALLAT and GESHEM)

Governors, thy wishes?

SANBALLAT

We came to say

The punishment thou gav'st still does not
stay

His joy.

THE KING

What meanest thou? Speak on.

SANBALLAT

Nine years ago, we came and told thee, King,
Of one knave Nehemiah. We would bring
Thee safety, King, again to-day. Ye gave
A punishment to him, nine years ago
Because he sought to make himself a knave
In trying to be king. I told thee this,
I come once more to tell thee, thou shouldst
know

He truly seems to love the task that thou
Hast given him for punishment, and now
It would seem wise to change his work again,
And give him duties that would cause him
pain.

THE KING
(*incredulously*)

Thou sayest he loves his toil as felon slave?

GESHEM
(*to KING*)

He truly does! Ha, ha, (*scornfully*) he is a
knave.

THE KING
(*thoughtfully*)

What shall I give him, then, to do that he
May still be punished for disloyalty?

SANBALLAT
(*wickedly*)

It may seem strange, indeed, to thee, blest
King,

But I have thought it would be suffering
For him, if thou wouldst bring him unto
thee,

Within thy court, and offer fealty
And homage to him, give him ease and gain.
I know him well! (*chuckling*) I'm sure, to
him, 'twere pain

To idle festive hours away in ease.

I surely know, he would not relish these

Gay feasting days of Court life. Ah, I know
To him it would be misery and woe.

THE KING
(*doubtfully*)

To him it would be misery and woe?

SANBALLAT
(*with decision*)

To him, it would be misery and woe.

THE KING
(*to COURT MESSENGERS*)

Bring Nehemiah, and each convict slave
Who toils on yonder pile. It is the hour
Of day when each is coming from his work.

GESHEM
(*delightedly*)

Ah, we shall see again that fool and knave
Who loves his labor. King, increase thy
power,
And give him work that he will loathe and
shirk,—

Give Nehemiah work that he will hate!

SANBALLAT
(*to KING*)

'Twould be just punishment. Why longer
wait?

(*Enter MESSENGERS and several galley slaves,
including the overseer of the squad of
toilers.*)

MESSENGER

(to KING)

Thy subjects, King of Persia, now are here.

(pointing to slaves)

OVERSEER

(explaining to KING)

Save Nehemiah; he had work o'er there,
Upon yon pile of stones. He ever stays
Long past the hours of all his working days.
I say, "Enough's enough!" We toil all day,
Yea, thirteen hours,—more than this time,
I say

We cannot serve! The hours are very long
Except for—

(smiling tenderly with loving, parental ex-
pression as he thinks of NEHEMIAH)

him who always works with song
Upon his lips. For him, the day is ever very
brief;

But for the rest of us,

(with wave of hand he indicates the
slaves about him)

O King, our grief

Is very great!

THE KING

(addressing the other slaves)

My men, and what say'st thou?

MEN

(almost moaning)

King, for the rest of us, our misery
Is very great.

SANBALLAT

(eagerly)

I told thee so, my King!
This Nehemiah should have suffering,
Deep suffering, and pain, and want, and woe!

GESHEM

(to KING)

This man who sought to be a King should
know
The pangs of hell. His work should day by
day
Be weary burden wearing life away.

THE KING

(to MESSENGER)

Bring Nehemiah, tell him I send word
For him to come at once,—let this be heard.

(exit MESSENGER hastily)

*(to SANBALLAT and GESHEM with tone
indicating doubt)*

I took thy oaths, my Governors, the day
I sent him to yon stone pile. Now the way
Grows complicated. What am I to do
To punish him? It may, indeed, be true
He hath not yet atoned; and, yet, I trust,
We have judged righteous judgment. Ah,

we must
Ask Nehemiah's God this time to tell
Just what is right to do,—that which is well.
(*The KING bows his head a moment, as if in
prayer. The QUEEN, also, bows her head
reverently. SANBALLAT and GESHEM
shift from one foot to another, clear their
throats, and appear annoyed.*)

SANBALLAT

(*anxiously interrupting, to KING*)
The question is a simple one. I know
An easy life at Court would bring him woe.
(*enter NEHEMIAH*)

NEHEMIAH

(*he has grown older yet more radiant; he is
dressed as a rough workman*)
(*joyously*)

King, hast thou sent for me to come, I pray?

THE KING

(*Appears deeply moved. The QUEEN looks
at NEHEMIAH with the tender expression
of a mother.*)

Yea, Prince, (*pauses as if embarrassed*) I
sent for thee—(*hesitatingly*) for thee—
to say

That thou shalt live in ease within my sight,
As royal Cupbearer. Thou may'st begin
To choose thine own attendants. Bring the
ring

And royal robe (*to attendant*).

(*Attendant brings at once a costly satin robe of many colors and places the garment tenderly in NEHEMIAH'S hands. NEHEMIAH drops the robe quickly to the ground and covers his face with his hands as if grieved.*)

Thou shalt have riches, honor, power, might.

(*NEHEMIAH picks the robe up from the floor as if fulfilling a duty. He shudders as his rough hands touch the soft satin.*)

Why speakest thou not to me? Hast thou naught

To say, thou menial slave, with ransom bought

And paid for by thy King? Wouldst thou not come

And serve as Cupbearer within my home
And court?

NEHEMIAH

(*to KING while he looks longingly toward the OVERSEER*)

King, there is much to do, as he (*indicating OVERSEER*) can tell.

I should not leave my work. 'Twould not be well

With thee (*to OVERSEER*) and all thy men
(*turning to slaves*)

(*NEHEMIAH, still holding the costly robe,*

*stands among the toilers. Unthinkingly,
he begins stroking the soft satin garment.
His hands, rough with toil, catch harshly
on the soft satin. He shudders. To KING.)*

Blest King, my very hands are hardened now
To toil,—to roughest work. Why should I
cease

My labors? There are those to serve, I vow,
Much fitter, in this Court. Pray, call on
these,

And let me go. Blest King, (*pleadingly*)
they're needing me,
These men (*indicating slaves*) are not so
strong as I.

Ah, see
My brawny arms! (*bares his muscular arms*)

THE OVERSEER
(*to KING*)

My King, one word,
When he (*indicating NEHEMIAH*) first came
to me, I, too, had heard
How he had sought to be a king o'er there,
Within Jerusalem. I took great care
To make his punishment full hard, O King.
I heaped upon him curses! Suffering
Became his daily portion! Yea, I know
He had full measure in his meed of woe.
I hated him! And why?—I cannot tell,—
I longed to see him suffer pangs of hell.

QUEEN AND KING

(eagerly, as if suffering)

And did he suffer?

OVERSEER

At first, there were days

When all his stones seemed mountains.

Bitter ways,

My King, belong unto the felon-slave.

Well doth he pay for all the hours he gave

To sin.

THE KING

(to OVERSEER)

And this man *(indicating NEHEMIAH)*, did
he murmur much?

OVERSEER

(to KING)

Ah, no, my King, I never have seen such

As he! With every stone he toiled to break,

It fairly seemed, he did arise, awake,

To higher things! My King, I cannot lend

Him even unto thee—he is our friend!

*(the OVERSEER and slaves crowd lovingly
about NEHEMIAH)*

(Startled) Ah, what have I said? Shall I be
punished more?

I told the truth but did not think before

I spoke!

KING

(to all—with firmness)

But I have spoken, and my word
Is first and last our law,—it must be heard!

SANBALLAT)

(laughing wickedly,—to GESHEM)

His *(indicating Nehemiah)* happy days, I
know, are truly past,

We have accomplished all we wish at last!

KING

(to NEHEMIAH)

Speak up, and tell me—what hast thou to
say

About thy work?

NEHEMIAH

(to KING)

My King, just now, the way
Is very bright for me, upon yon pile
Of stones; if I might work there for a while
(pleadingly)

I know that I might help these men *(indicating slaves)*. I stand

Ready to serve, my King *(pleadingly)*. We
have had good

Days yonder! *(As if pointing to stone pile.)*

If one only understood! *(earnestly)*

(Regretfully) If I should—come—*(slowly)*
—to thee— I know—that—I—

Can do no more than come, alas, and try
To serve thee well. *(As if convincing himself of a duty.)*

KING

Hast thou forgotten, pray
Doth memory recall that long past day
Thou wrought upon the towering walls that
stand
About Jerusalem?

NEHEMIAH

(joyously)

Ah, King, my hand
Still builds those walls.

KING

(startled)

Thy hand still builds those walls?

NEHEMIAH

(to KING)

Ah, yes, blest King, and not a stone e'er falls.
Each rock I crush o'er there, it is, indeed,
For these redeemed captives. Yea, their
need

Is yet my prayer, O King.

KING

(eagerly)

And wouldst thou go
To view those walls again? Speak, let me
know!

*(Leans forward eagerly. NEHEMIAH kneels
at feet of KING.)*

SANBALLAT AND GESHEM

(afraid)

King, why speakest thou so? Art thou, then,
mad?

This is his wish to go,—his prayer, ah, had—
We our own way—

KING

(interrupting, firmly)

Hold, fools! I listened once
To all thou hadst to say. I, too, was dunce
And knave, indeed, to heed thy foolish lies!
This man, *(bending forward, as he tenderly
places his hand on NEHEMIAH'S bowed
head)* is Prince, indeed; yea, he may rise
And go again to view those walls. His creed
Of kingship is to meet each human need
With love. He truly was a king o'er there,
E'en at Jerusalem, and monarch where
Those felon-slaves were toiling day by day.
To be a king is just to watch and pray!
I see it now, yea, all is very plain;
He seeks no earthly kingship. No, nor gain
Is there for him in title when he knows
The joy of daily work where'er he goes.

*(Summons messengers and whispers direc-
tions. They chain SANBALLAT and GE-
SHEM together. They are roughly dragged
from the stage.)*

(To SANBALLAT and GESHEM)

Go forth from me! Thy faces nevermore
Shall look on mine! Go forth, the open door

Of hades waits for every cursed lie
That would besmirch true manhood. They
shall die,—

These falsehoods, every one, but man is free,
Born of one true Creator, God, is he!

Such is the teaching of his ministry; (*indicating* NEHEMIAH.)

Thou shalt be punished. All that thou hast
said,

Each idle word thou uttered stand'st as curse
Of wrong before thee. Yea, thou shalt be fed
By jealousy. Ah, could'st thou suffer worse?

(SANBALLAT and GESHEM with heads bowed
in shame depart. They are bound between
two messengers.)

(To NEHEMIAH, waving him permission to
arise.)

To-morrow, thou and I, and all these men,
(*indicating slaves*)

With our blest Queen, and Court, shall go
again

To see Jerusalem.

NEHEMIAH

(to KING)

(*gratefully*)

Blest King, our gain
Shall be to find those walls still strongly
stand,—

This is our kingdom, Sire.

KING
(to NEHEMIAH)

I pledge my hand
That I regret those long and bitter days
That thou hast toiled on pile of stones. The
ways
Of blind revenge are hard, indeed, to bear.
(Weeps.)

NEHEMIAH

My King, I pray thee, do not have a care
For those days; they were sweet, indeed, to
me,—

Those blessed hours I knew that I might be
A friend to all I wrought with. Even, then,
As slaves condemned, we still were friends
and—men.

Jerusalem! (*Extending his arms as if to an
invisible City.*) I see thy walls again,
Rising about me. Father, (*eyes raised to
heaven*) I am blest

With all thine hand hath given me! I pray
To thank Thee ever on my homeward way.
Jerusalem, I saw thy walls arise
Above yon pile of stones! King, my surprise
Was very great when I, awake, didst see
The heavenly city come to set me free
From all my weary toil and suffering!
Ah, thou shalt see Jerusalem, my King!
The new Jerusalem, with walls built high,—

High unto heaven that he who passeth by
May see the captive now is safe, indeed,
Within the city, coming down from heaven,
The city, founded peaceably, and given
To Love and Life and joy and work; yea,
these

Are its foundation stones. The God of peace
Hath built Jerusalem! And, over all,
The Father watcheth tenderly! The wall
Of his protecting love stands strong and true
About the remnant! Israel's captive Jew
Hath been redeemed! He is not bond, nor
free,

Nor male, nor female, Jew, nor Greek is he!
Messiah's hope shall free! Ah, we shall see
(*to all, as if prophesying*)

Jerusalem! Father, thanks be to Thee.

CANTICLE XII.

CASTING OUT SELFISHNESS, LETHARGY, AND
IDOLATRY. SALVATION.

DESCRIPTION: *Same as Canticle VIII.*

DISCOVERED: *All the people gathered before
the walls at mid-day.*

TIME: *Ten days later.*

ALL

(*intoning*)

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness
thereof;

The world, and they that dwell therein.

For he hath founded it upon the seas,

And established it upon the floods.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?

And who shall stand in his holy place?

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;

Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,

And hath not sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive a blessing from the Lord,

And righteousness from the God of his sal-
vation.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;

And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:

And the King of glory will come in.

Who is the King of glory?

The Lord strong and mighty,

The Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;

Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is the King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
He is the King of glory." (Psalm 24.)

EZRA

*(Reading, before the people, from Isaiah
52:1.)*

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion;
put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem,
the holy city; for henceforth there shall no
more come into thee the uncircumcised and
the unclean."

*(Closes the book, and turning, looks intently
at the temple. All the people look toward
the temple. ELIASHIB is seen running up
and down the steps of the temple carry-
ing armsful of TOBIAH'S personal belong-
ings, such as robes, caps, shoes, etc. Some
of these belongings he occasionally drops,
and they are carelessly strewn about the
temple steps.)*

(Turning about and addressing the people.)
Our friend, Cupbearer of the King, returns
to-day.

ALL

(shouting gladly)

Ah ha, he comes—he comes—the way
Of peace is Nehemiah's.

(ELIASHIB is busied in the door of the temple with his own personal work.)

EZRA

(disapprovingly to ELIASHIB)

A good word

Hast thou to say to him?

ELIASHIB

(carelessly to EZRA)

Yea, I have wrought

Within this temple, just as he has taught.

EZRA

(to ELIASHIB)

For thyself, alone, hast wrought?

ELIASHIB

(to EZRA)

At times, 'tis true.

All work may not be given for Greek and Jew.

(HANANI and HANANIAH are sleeping soundly at one end of the porch of the temple. SLEEP, in dull colors, is watching jealously over them.)

EZRA

(pointing derisively toward the sleepers)

Yet they were truly left in charge! Yon temple wall

They have not guarded. Sleep on, should they fall,

Would they awake? (The sleepers, breath-

ing heavily, move, in their sleep, over very near the edge of the porch.) Ah, lethargy, I know

Of none more deadly enemy and foe! (*pointing toward sleepers*)

Nor home, nor church thou guardest when with sleep

Thine eyes are heavy. A still small voice will come,

And sadly say: "Couldst thou not watch one hour,

And keep a loving guard o'er church and home?"

(A loud blare of trumpets is heard without. Enter chariots and drivers, Court attendants, KING ARTAXERXES and QUEEN, former slaves dressed as nobles. NEHEMIAH enters last, accompanied by the five beautiful women, INTUITION, GRATITUDE, PATIENCE, CHARITY, and WAKEFULNESS.)

NEHEMIAH

(to All)

Greeting, my friends. *(All bow reverently.)*

The walls *(examining walls carefully)* still stand, I see.

I thank thee for thy true fidelity! *(Again bows to all.)*

(At this moment, ELIASHIB emerges from the temple, carrying softest of down pil-

lows, images, robes, and many personal belongings. NEHEMIAH discerns this proceeding, and bounding up the steps of the temple, seizes ELIASHIB, and shakes him energetically).

So thou (*scornfully*)

Hast prepared for *thee* a great chamber,
Where aforetime our fathers laid their meat
offerings,

The frankincense, and the vessels, and the
tithes of the corn,

The new wine and the oil, which was com-
manded to be given to the Levites, and
the singers, and the porters;

And the offerings of the priests?

(turning to the KING)

Artaxerxes, king of Babylon,

Thou bearest witness, in all this time,

I was not at Jerusalem.

THE KING

(to NEHEMIAH)

I bear witness, Nehemiah, my Cupbearer.

NEHEMIAH

(to QUEEN)

O, thou noble Queen of Babylon,

Thou bearest witness, in all this time,

I was not at Jerusalem.

QUEEN

(to NEHEMIAH)

I bear witness, Nehemiah, King's Cupbearer.

NEHEMIAH

(to Court)

Worthy Court of Artaxerxes Longimanus,
and the Queen of Babylon,
Thou bearest witness, in all this time,
I was not at Jerusalem.

THE COURT

(together)

We bear witness with our King and Queen.

NEHEMIAH

(sadly)

To-day I have found the temple profaned;
They have entered as thieves in God's sight.
*(TOBIAH, hearing the conversation without,
comes to the door of the temple, and
yawns as if awakened from a long sleep.)*

For themselves

*(Pointing derisively to ELIASHIB and
TOBIAH.)*

they have wrought, but naught have
they gained

For God is the Lord of right.

For themselves they have wrought, but
naught have they gained,

For our God is the Lord of right.

*(NEHEMIAH enters the temple, and return-
ing again to the door, casts out, far be-
yond the wall, the household stuff of ELI-*

ASHIB and TOBIAH. *Both men steal to one side of the stage.* NEHEMIAH *commands servants to come with water for cleansing. During this process, the singers flee from the stage, every one returning to his own field.)*

(to the KING)

I perceive that the portions of the Levites
Have not been given them. *(Looking about where the singers stood.)*

For the Levites and the singers that did the
work

Are fled every one to his field.

(Addressing the rulers, and pointing toward the empty temple.)

Why is the house of God forsaken?

(Bows his head and weeps.)

RULERS

(nonplussed)

Why is the house of God forsaken?

NEHEMIAH

(to rulers)

Is it not that they who would own this sacred
place *(points derisively to ELIASHIB and TOBIAH who are seeking to hide)*

Have driven those who work without, and
they

Would own outright all goodness and all
grace,

As if they could be purchased? Let them
pay

The price of sorrow!

*(Drives ELIASHIB and TOBIAH away. They
leave sorrowfully, carrying quantities of
personal belongings.)*

RULERS

(repeating with emphasis)

Let them pay

The price of sorrow!

NEHEMIAH

*(Observing HANANI and HANANIAH, sleep-
ing, while SLEEP watchfully guards them.)*

Why is mankind so loath to keep awake?

Is God not good to think of? Why, then,
sleep

Away one's precious hours? Arise, and shake

*(goes to edge of porch and gives men
vigorous shaking)*

This cursed lethargy aside. Yea, keep

The faith, and thou shalt richly bless, indeed,

All men, if wakefulness be thy one creed.

(Both men wake. Exit SLEEP very quietly.)

(to MESSENGER)

Call all Judah, *(gladly)* let them bring

The tithe of corn and new wine,

And oil to fill our empty treasuries;

Let them gather the fruit from the field and
vine,

That our God in heaven we please!

(Exit MESSENGER.)

(NEHEMIAH singles out SHEMAIAH, the priest, ZADOK, the Scribe, and PEDAI AH of the Levites, and HANAN, and summons them about him.)

Thou hast been faithful, for thou
Hast distributed unto thy brethren.

(Enter men and women and children. They are all carrying baskets of corn and wine and oil.)

ALL

We come, blest Nehemiah, here to-day
To praise the King of kings and watch and pray.

(Enter men with ware, selling fish. They go directly to the nobles and give them their earnings.)

NEHEMIAH

(to the Nobles)

"What evil thing is this that ye do,
And profane the Sabbath day?"

(Nobles quickly cast coins to the ground. Darkness seems to creep on suddenly, as if a storm were rising. The gates are open. NEHEMIAH gives orders that they shall be closed.)

Let all the gates be shut this night,
And opened not till after the Sabbath day.

ALL
(together)

Let all the gates be shut!

(The iron gates swing forcefully shut, and as they close the setting sun shines forth with wondrous splendor.)

NEHEMIAH

(firmly to those who sell fish)

Why lodg'st thou about the wall? What right
Hast thou to profane the Sabbath day?

There remaineth a rest, a Sabbath rest,

A quiet hour of meekness truly blest

When we work for God alone.

(The fishmongers cast their baskets aside and earnestly listen to NEHEMIAH.)

(Enter several young men talking to young women of foreign birth. The women have low, degraded appearance. They are all intoxicated. Loud, coarse jesting and vulgar caressing.)

THE YOUNG MEN

(to NEHEMIAH)

Nehemiah, *(laughing boisterously)* our
wives of foreign birth!

NEHEMIAH

(sadly)

And thou, now *(to several)*

Wouldst wed strange wives? *(To another young man)* and thou *(to another)* and

thou?

Strange fancies have we when we seek our
own,

And not another's good. None can atone
For wrong; forever it is cast without,
With "dogs, and sorcerers," with creeds and
doubts!

Strange wives, strange creeds, strange gods,
strange idle prayers,

Strange deprivations, strange diseases,
cares!

*(The women of strange birth slip quietly
from the stage. The daughters of SHAL-
LUM silently take their places. The peo-
ple with baskets of corn and wine and oil
on their arms sing together.)*

ALL

*(The people walk in groups on the tower-
ing heights of the walls. See J. James
Tissot's Bible illustration, "The Proces-
sion on the Walls of Jerusalem," p. 544.
They read as they walk. Each one holds
two books of the Law, one in the right
hand and one in the left. The last rays
of the setting sun shine softly over the
procession of singers.)*

(Singing together.)

"Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.

Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;
And uphold me with a willing spirit.
Thou delightest not in sacrifice;
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offerings.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou
wilt not despise.

Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion:
Built Thou the walls of Jerusalem.
Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem."

NEHEMIAH

*(hands uplifted to heaven—to the men and
women on the heights of the walls)*

"Remember me, O my God, concerning this,
And wipe not out my good deeds that I have
done

For the house of my God, and for the offices
thereof—

Remember me, O my God, for good."

For I, as the King's Cupbearer,
Bring peace and joy to earth.

Yea, I, as the King's Cupbearer,
Herald mankind's new birth.

I prophesy peace, salvation.

Jerusalem, saved, begins

To mould the world in one nation

And cleanse earth's temple of sins—

Sins that have stirred through malice

Earth's nations to war and hate.

Jerusalem holds the chalice
Of love at her heavenly gate.
Within Jerusalem, all men shall be
Both male and female, sinless, deathless, free.
*(The five beautiful women standing on the
highest point of the walls look tenderly
down to NEHEMIAH. They typify col-
lectively that which, according to the Sha-
vian quotation previously given, repre-
sents an "eternal womanly principle in
the universe." As these women walk
upon the walls, they are intently reading
two books of the Law which they hold
aloft in either hand before them. Bril-
liant rays of the setting sun light up
the pages of the open books.)*

"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O
Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is builded as a city that is com-
pact together;

Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the
Lord,

Unto the testimony of Israel,

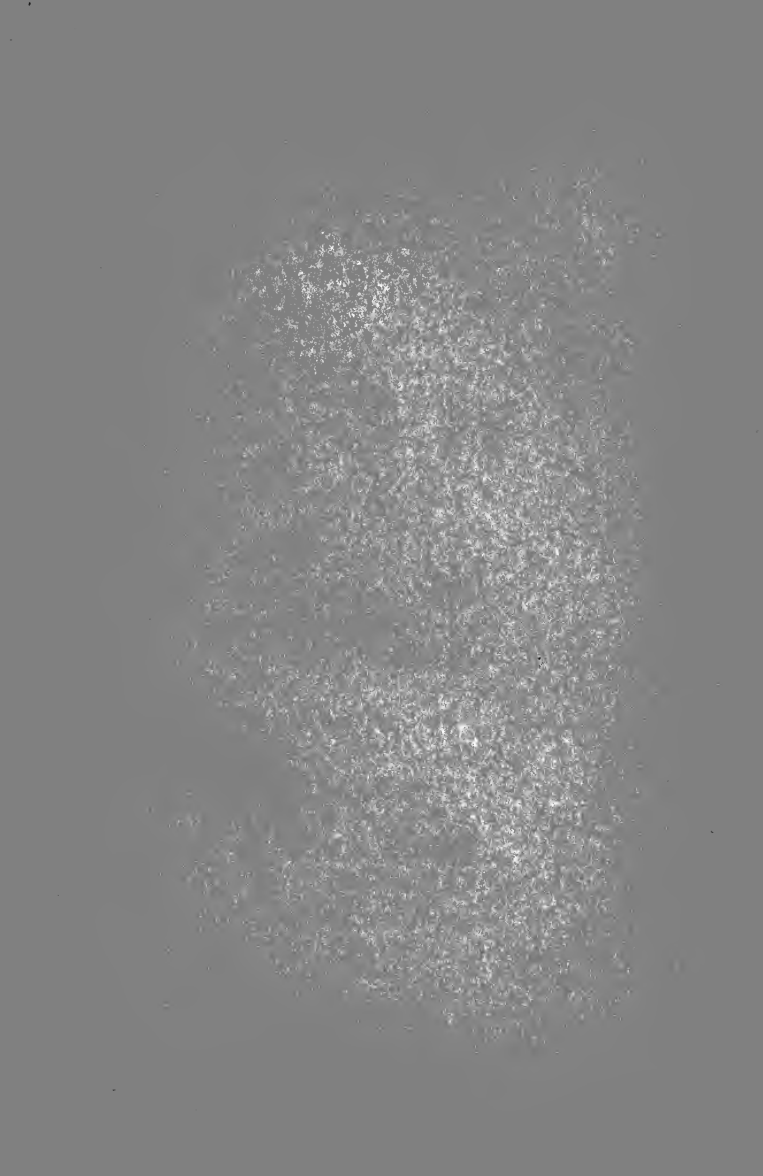
To give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

They shall prosper that love thee."

(Psalm 122.)

THE END.

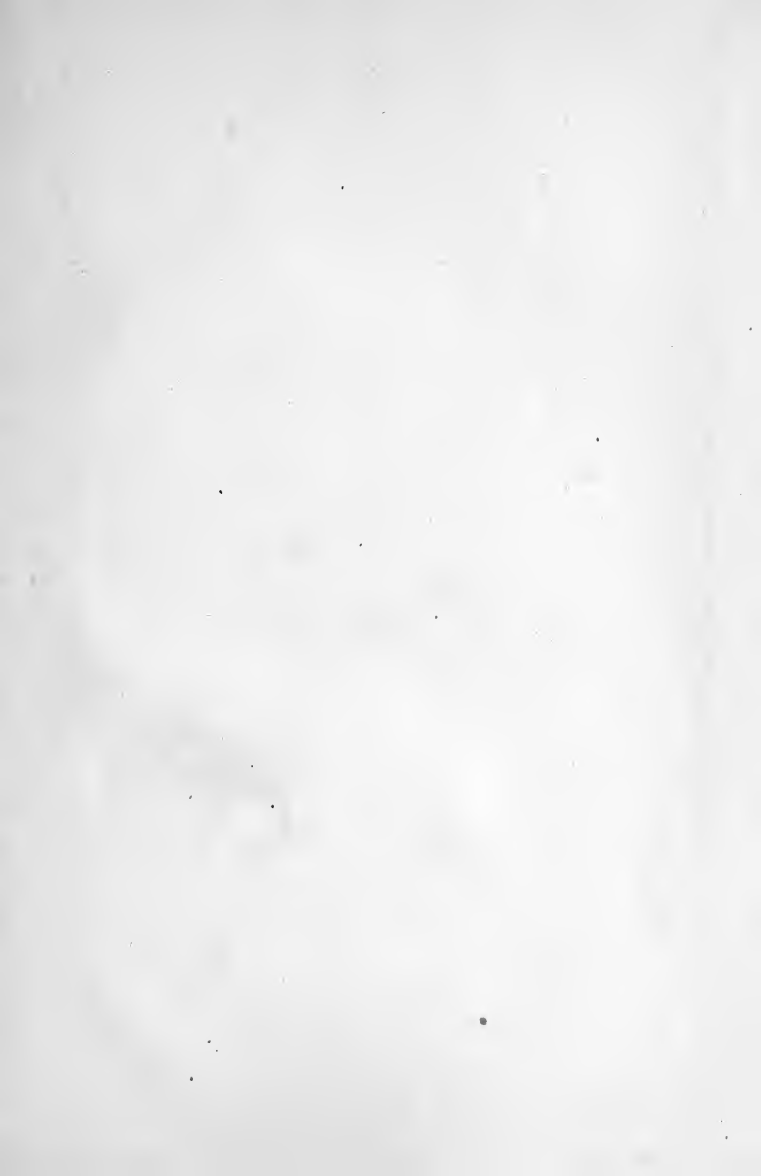


7

UDELL PRINTING SERVICE
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

LBD 19







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 018 603 764 9